

**FERGUSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, MAY 10, 2021  
6:00 PM**

**ATTENDANCE**

The Planning Commission held its first meeting of the month on Monday, May 10, 2021, as a virtual meeting. In attendance:

**Commission:**

Jeremie Thompson – Chair  
Jerry Binney – Vice Chair  
Rob Crassweller - Secretary  
Shannon Holliday  
Bill Keough  
Dr. Ellen Taricani  
Lewis Steinberg - Alternate  
Ralph Wheland  
Qian Zhang - Alternate

**Staff:**

Jenna Wargo, Planning & Zoning Director  
Kristina Aneckstein, Community Planner  
Jeff Ressler, Zoning Administrator

Others in attendance: Rhonda Demchak, Recording Secretary; Kevin Miller, Architect; Todd Smith, Project Manager, ELA Group, Inc.; Rick Messick, Ferguson Township Resident

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Thompson called the Ferguson Township Planning Commission's regular meeting to order on Monday, May 10, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Thompson noted that the Planning Commission meeting had been advertised in accordance to the PA Sunshine Act as a virtual meeting via Zoom. There was also an audio conference bridge that was accessible by dialing the Ferguson Township's main line at 814-238-4651 and then dialing extension 3799. Persons attending the meeting as members of the public and wanted to participate were asked to enter their name, municipality, and topic by utilizing the Q&A bubble at the bottom of the screen. C-NET is recording as well.

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

**II. APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES APRIL 12, 2021**

Mr. Crassweller suggested changing the language on page 2 regarding "more dense rural areas" to be clearer. Also, Mr. Crassweller suggested spelling out acronyms. Ms. Aneckstein will make the changes to the minutes.

Mr. Crassweller moved that the Planning Commission **approve** the minutes of April 12, 2021. Dr. Taricani seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**III. CITIZEN INPUT**

None.

**IV. LAND DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

**A. Centre Animal Conditional Use Application**

Ms. Wargo presented Conditional Use Application from Tussey Tracks LLC. (Centre Animal Hospital) located at 1518 West College Avenue, submitted to the Planning and

Zoning Department. The applicant is requesting Conditional Use approval for the use of the property, Tax Parcel 24-0019-072-0000 and 24-019-074-0000, as a Veterinarian Clinic in accordance with Chapter 27-304.2.E.(1). The property is located in the Terraced Streetscape Zoning District (TSD) and a Veterinarian Clinic is not included as a permitted use. Upon review by Township Staff, the proposed Veterinarian Clinic use is consistent with the stated intent of the Terraced Streetscape (TS) Zoning District and provides a complementary balance of land uses throughout the community meeting the needs of existing residents and businesses. This district strives to encourage a wide variety of commercial services, in appropriate locations, and to support a diverse range of business activities including professional, technical, and medical/health services. A Veterinarian Clinic at this location will provide an additional service for pet owners of the community and regional area. This clinic has operated at this location since 1987 and has continued to grow and evolve with newer technologies and services that are becoming standard in the veterinary healthcare industry. Included with the agenda, the Planning and Zoning Director has provided a memorandum outlining recommended conditions to include for the Public Hearing to be held by the Board of Supervisors on May 17, 2021.

Dr. Taricani asked about an access road or driveway on College Avenue and whether it will be completely removed when the two lots are consolidated. Ms. Wargo noted that it will be removed.

Mr. Todd Smith, Project Manager, ELA Group, Inc. gave an overview of the plan that was included in the agenda packet. Mr. Smith noted that the business continues to grow and needs to expand.

Ms. Holliday inquired the removal of the access road and about the safety of only having one way in and out. Mr. Smith stated that the access road is not made for two vehicle's and it creates challenges. As for having only one way in and out, Mr. Smith noted that from a design and operational perspective they are comfortable with the design.

Dr. Taricani questioned the parking in front of the building and if there will be enough room. Mr. Smith reviewed a slide explaining that there is a 12-foot buffer from the property line to the curb line.

Ms. Holliday asked if there will be head in parking only. Mr. Smith noted that there will be no designated parking for head in only.

Mr. Smith noted that due to the pandemic, the facility no longer offers Saturday and Sunday appointments and the owners do not want the current hours to be limited as a condition for use. Ms. Zhang asked for clarification with the hours of operation. Mr. Smith stated that the hours of operation shouldn't be a part of the condition and noted that the facility is not a 24/7 operation. Ms. Wargo stated she will investigate an alternative for the specific hours and noted that it was not the intention to hold the applicant to the hours indicated on the application.

Dr. Taricani asked if the existing trees and shrubs will be preserved. Mr. Smith noted that the majority would be preserved, but the internal trees for the parking lot expansion will be removed. Dr. Taricani stated that the plan is very nice.

Mr. Binney inquired if staff has heard from anyone near the facility expressing any questions or concerns. Ms. Wargo stated that the neighbors are not required to be notified for the Conditional Use Application and noted that no one has reached out to the office.

Mr. Keough inquired about the driveway near the house and asked if it is designated as a driveway or an alley. Mr. Smith stated that it is a driveway for anyone to use and not

an alley but can investigate further during the land development process.

Mr. Keough asked if the general business hours could be removed because it is a business and they need the flexibility for possible changes in the future.

Mr. Keough asked if the wording could be changed for bullet number two and three on page 7 of the agenda packet concerning overnight housing and kennels. Mr. Keough noted that there will be times that an animal will be required to spend the night.

Mr. Keough inquired about the sign that currently exist on the property and if it will remain. Mr. Smith stated that it will remain as is, but he has not had a discussion with the owners. Mr. Keough noted that the plan is a good improvement.

Mr. Keough moved that the Planning Commission **review**, consider conditions proposed by staff and make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to approve the Conditional Use Application for Tussey Tracks LLC. (Centre Animal Hospital) to operate as a Veterinarian Clinic at 1518 W. College Avenue with the conditions that are outlined. Mr. Binney seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **V. COMMUNITY PLANNING**

### **A. Home Occupation vs. Working from Home Discussion**

Mr. Ressler reviewed the memo that was included in the agenda packet regarding the differences between Home Occupation and working from home and what it means for the Township.

Mr. Keough asked if Mr. Ressler had to access any homes during the pandemic for possible home businesses. Mr. Ressler noted that he had not.

Mr. Wheland stated that since there have been no issues, there is nothing further that the Planning Commission needs to do. Mr. Keough concurred with Mr. Wheland. Dr. Taricani indicated that there could be new issues that arise now that the pandemic is coming to end with home offices.

## **VI. OFFICIAL REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCES**

### **A. Board of Supervisors**

Ms. Wargo will forward the report to the Planning Commission because it was not included in the agenda packet. The Board approved the amendment to remove the height incentives in the Terrace Streetscape District.

### **B. CRPC Report**

Dr. Taricani reported that they had a meeting on May 6, 2021 and had several reports from several organizations. There was a presentation on solar panel use and potential use in the area. A report from the Arbor Society noted that there are 17,000 trees and 260 different species in the region. There is a fitness center being planned in the Patton Township Industrial Park.

May is Bicycle Month and Dr. Taricani noted there are a lot of activities being planned.

Mr. Keough stated that in the western part of the Township they are not interested in solar panels on their agricultural land and asked when there are discussions to mention his concerns. Dr. Taricani concurred and noted there needs to be more

discussions. Ms. Rittenhouse stated that solar panels can't be placed just anywhere because they need to have the electrical component. Ms. Rittenhouse noted that there is a lot involved when dealing with solar energy.

**C. Land Development Plans**

Ms. Aneckstein reported that staff reviewed the Rogan/Sycamore Drive Subdivision plan and comments were sent back to the client. A resubmission should be forthcoming in the near future. The West College Student Housing Final Plan was submitted to the Township on May 3, 2021.

Mr. Keough expressed concerns with the next Planning Commission meeting on May 24, 2021 because he needs to be in attendance at the General Forum Meeting and would like to be a part of the discussion of the West College Student Housing Final Plan. Ms. Wargo noted that Mr. Keough could send his comments in prior to the meeting to be included. Ms. Zhang suggested adding the agenda item to the top of the agenda. Ms. Wargo noted that if the plan is ready it will be added at the beginning of the agenda.

Ms. Holliday noted that election day is May 18, 2021 and if anyone is interested working the polls to let her now

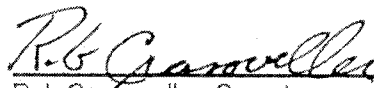
**D. Staff Updates**

Ms. Wargo reported Lance King, Township Arborist, has left his position and is now the Arborist at the Borough of State College. Ms. Wargo noted that they are putting together a part-time contract for Alan Sam who retired from the Borough of State College.

**II. ADJOURNMENT**

Dr. Taricani made a motion to adjourn the May 10, 2021 Planning Commission meeting at 7:20 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Rob Craswell, Secretary  
For the Planning Commission