

**FERGUSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2021
6:00 PM**

ATTENDANCE

The Planning Commission held its first meeting of the month on Monday, December 7, 2021, as a zoom meeting. In attendance:

Commission:

Jeremie Thompson – Chair
Shannon Holliday
Bill Keough
Dr. Ellen Taricani
Ralph Wheland
Qian Zhang
Jerry Binney

Staff:

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

Others in attendance: Rhonda Demchak, Recording Secretary

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Thompson called the Ferguson Township Planning Commission's regular meeting to order on Monday, December 7, at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Thompson noted that the Planning Commission meeting had been advertised in accordance with the PA Sunshine Act as a virtual zoom meeting with space available in the Township's main meeting room for any public members to participant. Persons attending 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.

Ms. Wargo took roll call, and the Planning Commission had a quorum. Mr. Crassweller was not able to attend the meeting but sent Ms. Wargo his comments on certain agenda items to read.

II. CITIZEN INPUT

There were none.

III. APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OCTOBER 25, 2021

Mr. Wheland moved that the Planning Commission **approve** the minutes of October 25, 2021. Mr. Keough seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Keough noted that the Township website listed the wrong time for the Planning Commission tonight and expressed his concern with accurateness. Ms. Wargo stated that it was properly advertised, but it was listed incorrectly on the website.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Official Map Amendments

Ms. Bassett reported that the Board of Supervisors requested staff to review bicycle and pedestrian connections shown on the Official Map. The Official Map was last updated and approved in October 2017. The Board identified amendments and potential additions that they would like to see reviewed for inclusion. Those comments are reflected in the attached spreadsheet along with staff's review comments. The Board referred these amendments to the Planning Commission for review and comment. The Planning Commission is being asked to review the proposed amendments and identify additional

connections to include in the Official Map amendment.

Ms. Bassett gave a brief description of the official map that can be found on the Township's Website. Trish Meeks, Senior Transportation Planner, Centre Region Council of Governments, was in attendance to answer questions.

Ms. Bassett reviewed the spreadsheet of comments that were received from the Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors. The spreadsheet is located in the packet agenda starting on page 5.

The following comments were made by the Planning Commission:

1. Should the condemned lot in Pine Grove Mills be noted on the Official Map as land the Township may want to acquire? Mr. Keough noted that parking is a major issue and recommends including on the Official Map.
2. Songer Lot in Park Forest – Ms. Wargo noted that the Township has been offered but has refused due to the stormwater issues. Mr. Keough asked what the downside would be to include on the map. Ms. Wargo stated that she doesn't have a preference either way but didn't feel that staff would accept adding to the map. Ms. Bassett's noted that the Township Engineer stated it would be a bad decision due to liability. Mr. Keough suggested adding to the map in case if something would arise.
3. Add a shared use path along Corl AND/OR Shared use path on Buckhout. – Mr. Keough noted that since this is not in the Township, it should be deleted. Also, Mr. Keough stated that he doesn't want the Borough to think that the Township is in favor of having a shared use path because it is a dangerous area.
4. What is the proposed facility along 45, on bike Route G, right through Pine Grove Mills? Do we want to put it on Official Map? West Ferguson is a MAJOR cycling area- look for connections. – Mr. Keough noted that there was a problem constructing the bike path area because some of the farms are preserved and it not acceptable on preserved farmlands. Mr. Keough asked what land is available to make the connection. Ms. Bassett noted that the previous update in 2017, there was a question about it if it were to show on the map or not. Mr. Binney noted that it is also part of the Pine Grove Mills Mobility Study. Mr. Keough stated that it would not be appropriate to have a link from Whitehall Road to Pine Grove Mills due to the preserved farms. Mr. Keough questioned why it would be included on the map given that it can't be done. As more farms are preserved with municipalities dealing with this issue, Mr. Wheland stated that he would suspect at some point a petition to the Agricultural Land Preservation Board to allow. Mr. Wheland in on the Centre County Agricultural Land Preservation Board and will inquire if there have been any discussions.
5. Look at Terrace Streetscape District (TSD) for needed connections – Mr. Keough stated that the primary alley that runs parallel to College Avenue will never go away and suggested designating a bike path to keep the bikes off the road.

Ms. Bassett noted that some areas have been updated since 2017 that includes the shared use path along Valley Vista is completed and the shared use path that connects to the Toll Brothers property along the Blue Course Drive extension.

Trish Meek noted that the shared roadway bike route along Devonshire Park Lane and West Aaron Drive was completed.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review and Approval of the 2022 Planning Commission Work Program

Ms. Bassett reviewed the work program that was included in the agenda packet that starts on page 15.

Mr. Keough noted that he, Mr. Thompson, Ms. Bassett, and Ms. Wargo attended the Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors meeting the night before and stated that there were a lot of discussion around the minor alteration processes. Mr. Keough suggested meeting to discuss how it will be managed.

Ms. Wargo read Mr. Crassweller's comments. Mr. Crassweller suggested placing Elder Cottages Research at #19, Alley and Private Streets Study at # 20, and moving everything else up.

Mr. Binney moved that the Ferguson Township Planning Commission **approve** the 2022 Ferguson Township Planning Commission Work Program. Dr. Taricani seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Review and Approval of the 2022 Planning Commission Calendar

Ms. Bassett reviewed the proposed calendar and noted it follows the Board of Supervisor's Calendar and accommodates for holidays. Ms. Basset will update the calendar to reflect two new holidays (Veteran's Day and Juneteenth) that will be added to the calendar.

Ms. Zhang suggested sending out calendar invitations for the meetings.

Mr. Thompson noted that the meetings are subject to cancellation if there are no agenda items.

Mr. Keough moved that the Ferguson Township Planning Commission **approve** the 2022 Ferguson Township Planning Commission Calendar. Mr. Wheland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Draft Thank You Letter to Steve Miller

Mr. Thompson noted that Supervisor Miller will be vacating his seat on the Board of Supervisors at the end of the year. The Planning Commission Chair has requested a Thank-You Letter to be sent to Mr. Miller from the Planning Commission acknowledging and honoring Mr. Miller's dedicated public service to the Township. The letter is attached to the agenda packet on page 18.

Mr. Wheland noted that he doesn't ever remember writing a letter to outgoing supervisors but isn't opposed either.

Mr. Keough noted that the word "serve" in the second sentence should be "service."

Dr. Taricani stated that it is a good time to start something new and approves of the letter.

Ms. Wargo will include the letter in her report on letterhead for the next Board meeting.

Mr. Binney moved that the Ferguson Township Planning Commission **approve** the Thank You Letter to Steve Miller. Mr. Thompson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

D. 2022 Meeting Format Discussion

Ms. Wargo noted that Public Meetings are a foundational element of democracy in local government. It's here that policy is reviewed, citizen and member's voices are heard, and decisions are made. Running an efficient meeting means sticking to the agenda at hand, appropriate procedures are followed and ensuring that there is enough time for productive dialogue. Planning Staff and the Chair have been reviewing existing meeting formats and procedures and would like to discuss opportunities for improvements on the following:

- (1) Community Planning Meeting and (1) Actionable Meeting every month
- Subdivision/Land Development Plan Review Process/Procedures
- Communications
- Meeting Procedures

Ms. Wargo noted that she feels the process is going well but does hear from some commission members that there needs to be better communication when plans are received. Ms. Wargo stated that she can't add additional meetings with the expectation that the applicant will show up because they aren't required to, and also expect staff to have their review comments prepared.

Ms. Wargo stated that Mr. Crassweller commented that with the pressures from developers and/or the MPC timeline would we be able to put a plan on the community planning meeting. Ms. Wargo stated yes.

Dr. Taricani stated that the stress being placed on the staff is a good point by requesting too much information prior to a meeting. Dr. Taricani stated it's a good process.

Ms. Zhang suggested making the meeting description clear when advertising.

Ms. Holliday commented that someone did ask at one time why the material couldn't be received prior to Friday before the meeting. Ms. Holliday also stated that she felt that staff is doing a good job is very open and always circles back with the Commissions questions/concerns.

Ms. Zhang asked is it legally required to receive a paper packet. Ms. Wargo stated it is not required. Ms. Zhang prefers a pdf packet.

Ms. Wargo noted that they go out on Friday due to deadlines.

Mr. Keough complimented Ms. Wargo and Ms. Bassett for their efforts. Mr. Keough stated that he sometimes gets the packet late on Friday and doesn't have the opportunity to ask questions because Monday is the day of the meeting. Mr. Keough noted that the new format could allow him to get the packet earlier and requested getting it earlier. Mr. Keough would like staff to put in the form of a paragraph the vision for the Community Planning Meeting and the Actionable Meeting. Mr. Keough also suggested that when we get a land development plan to have a structured format plan on how it is reviewed, perhaps by categories.

Mr. Thompson suggested having a meeting to establish a structure plan in the new year. Mr. Keough would be happy to meet with the Chair and Staff. Ms. Zhang suggested to have a small group work on the structure and review at a future meeting as a group.

Mr. Thompson asked if there should be a section titled Open Discussion. Mr. Keough supports the idea. Dr. Taricani noted that it is a good idea, but there needs to be a time limit. Mr. Thompson agreed to the time limit and suggested 15 minutes. Mr. Keough suggested having Open Discussion only at one meeting.

VI. OFFICIAL REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCES

A. Board of Supervisors

Ms. Wargo reported that the Board met on December 6, 2021 and noted that the SALDO amendments were authorized for advertisement. The Planning Commission will see it again in January. There is a Zoning Hearing Board on December 14, 2021, for the TGIF site. They want to put in a 2000 square foot addition and requesting a variance. The Board authorized staff to advertise the request for proposals for consulting services to update the Terraced Streetscape District.

B. CRPC Report

Dr. Taricani reported they met on December 2, 2021 and talked about the restart of work on Atherton Street that will include sewage work on Calder Way. They talked about the Whitehall Regional Park as well.

C. Land Development Plans

Ms. Bassett reported that the Rogan/Sycamore Drive Subdivision was re-submitted. Jeff and Ron are completing their review. The Nittany Dental Plan has been withdrawn. There are several plans that Staff is waiting to get back.

D. Staff Updates

There were no updates.

E. Communications to the Planning Commission

Mr. Binney reported he had a communication from a resident about the West College Buckhout project and the concern with pedestrian safety. Mr. Thompson noted at the Board meeting last night there were comments from the public regarding safety. Ms. Wargo stated that it is being addressed by staff.

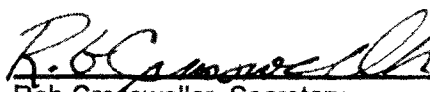
Ms. Zhang also received a communication from a resident and forwarded the email to staff and the Planning Commission.

Mr. Keough received a communication regarding the alley at the Yocum Property regarding accessibility. There is a work trailer in the middle of the alley. Ms. Wargo noted that Planning and Public Works will look into the matter.

VII. Adjournment

Mr. Binney made a motion to adjourn the December 7, 2021, Planning Commission meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Rob Crassweller, Secretary
For the Planning Commission