

TREDYFFRIN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
March 17, 2011
7:00 PM

Members Present:

Trip Lukens, Vice Chairman
Libby Brinton
Michael Broadhurst¹
Tom Cooper
Robert O'Leary
Tory Snyder
Ed Sweeney

Members Not Present:

Robert Whalen, Chairman
Sean McCauley

Board of Supervisors Liaison Present:

E.J. Richter

Staff Members Present:

Steve Burgo, P.E. Township Engineer
Mimi Gleason, Township Manager
Kate Jones, Community Development Coordinator
Tom Scott, Assistant Manager

Vice Chairman Lukens called the meeting to order at 7:00.

Consideration of draft meeting minutes of 1/20/11

Vice Chairman Lukens asked for a motion on the draft minutes; Mr. O'Leary moved and Mr. Sweeney seconded for approval as drafted. MOTION APPROVED with 6-0 vote.

04- 2011 Devon 50 Inc., 920 N. Valley Forge Road: Application for lot line change: Devon 50 Inc., Estate of Evelyn Duncan, and Mrs. Patricia Rauch. Proposed lot line change involving three properties in the R-1 zoning district.

Mike Kissinger from Pennoni Associates Inc. presented the lot line change plan for the applicant. Mr. Kissinger advised the PC that the lot line change would give direct access to and frontage along North Valley Forge Road for the Boy Scout troop property. Currently the troop has an easement for access; the easement would be extinguished

¹ Mr. Broadhurst joined the meeting at 7:20.

with the lot line change recording. Mr. Kissinger said the shape of the new portion of the troop property is based on the current location of the driveway; and indicated there are no physical markers to indicate new property line locations. Mr. Burgo recommended the applicant place pins or concrete monuments to mark the location.

Mr. Kissinger told the PC that the proposed impervious surface coverage for the three lots involved is in compliance with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance; that he has calculations for the net lot areas involved but not the coverage.

Ms. Snyder moved to recommend approval of the lot line change to the Board of Supervisors as shown on the 2/21/11 plan prepared by Pennoni Associates Inc. with the conditions that the plans be revised to include the lot area and coverage calculations and notes regarding the placement of pins and monuments to the site for the new lot boundaries. Mr. Cooper seconded the motion. MOTION APPROVED with 6-0 vote.

Discuss an amendment to the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance giving the Board of Supervisors the authority for approval or denial of a land development plan; and related portions of the zoning ordinance.

Continuation of the discussion from the 1/20/11 Planning Commission meeting.

Ms. Gleason explained that the Board of Supervisors has a hearing scheduled for its 3/21/11 meeting for the draft amendment but that a decision to adopt the amendment would not be made at that time; and that such a decision would not happen until after the PC and Board had addressed the proposed revisions to the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance set forth in the Sidewalk Subcommittee report. The PC can make a recommendation to the Board now, or wait until a future meeting before the subsequent Board hearings on the issue.

Ms. Gleason advised the Planning Commission that the current land development review process was put in place in 1987 with the enactment of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, to replace what had been a site plan review.

Mr. Lukens said he did not think the system is broken and that it does not need to be fixed.

Mr. O'Leary asked if they could vote on making a recommendation to the BOS; Mr. Lukens said he would prefer to wait on a recommendation until the full PC is available to make comments and vote. Mr. Cooper asked what the benefit of the change to the approval process would be. Mr. Broadhurst said the issue is not about the PC but about the division of labor between the PC and BOS.

Ms. Gleason said each Supervisor has told her that the PC is respected and appreciated by them.

Mr. Sweeney said the Board of Supervisors could better show their support to the PC by participating in an analysis of commercial development standards and they should table this matter. Mr. O'Leary said he agreed and that it is important to review such matters so that Tredyffrin can be competitive with other regional municipalities for commercial land development; and that right now Tredyffrin has an advantage in that it has one stop for applicants to make, not two, in the review process.

Mrs. Snyder said the Supervisors can appoint qualified people to the PC to review land development plans; people with experience and qualifications in real estate and land development. Elected Supervisors may have other but unrelated skills.

Mr. Lukens opened the floor to comments from the audience.

Patteye Benson asked if the members were going to participate with the Board in the upcoming public hearing.

Mike Heaberg said the PC members had made several good points and encouraged the PC to speak at the upcoming Board hearing of 3/21/11.

Carol Clarke said the PC should give the Board its advice because the public needs to be educated about the role of the Planning Commission and what a good job it does.

A resident in the audience recommended the Planning Commission also consider advising the Board of Supervisors that in addition to costs to the municipality and applicants, a change in review procedure could increase the costs of home owners associations and neighborhood groups in participating in land development discussions.

Mr. Broadhurst said the PC needs to be accountable because it does not always treat applicants before it well; accountability is therefore a relevant issue to be considered.

Mr. Lukens suggested the Planning Commission forward its advice on the matter to BOS to be considered at the hearing of 3/21/11. After additional discussion the PC identified several ideas that constitute its advice to the BOS on the matter:

- If the SALDO is to be amended to grant the BOS land development approval authority, the BOS should enumerate specifically how the review should work in concert with the PC review; parallel reviewing tracks or PC first then BOS.
- The BOS can pursue accountability of the PC by having BOS liaison attend the meetings and a PC liaison could be chosen to attend BOS meetings. The PC can be accountable to the BOS by the appointment process and possibly term limits even if the amendment is not adopted.
- BOS should consider the costs (in time and money) of a new procedure that would involve PC and BOS review to the Board, the Township staff, the applicants and neighborhood associations who may wish to participate in the public meetings.

- By keeping the PC vested with the authority the BOS can take advantage of the PC members' professional expertise and experience that is relevant to land development; the PC is willing to put in the extra time and attention needed to fully review a project as the final reviewing body.

Other

Mr. O'Leary asked Mr. Burgo about the letter the Planning Commission received concerning the flag lot issue. Mr. Burgo explained a resident wanted to express to the PC that the zoning ordinance requires the flag pole portion of the lot into consideration for impervious surface calculations if it has impervious areas on it, like the driveway, but that it does not allow the area of the flag pole portion to be counted towards the required minimum lot area.

Mr. O'Leary said the implementation of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan was not proceeding according to the action item list in the plan with regards to the Planning Commission and ordinance review and amendments. Ms. Gleason said that the PC has reviewed several zoning ordinance amendments as a whole and that PC members have and are participating in subcommittee and working group reviews. Upcoming ordinance matters that will be before the whole Planning Commission include draft amendment to the SALDO sidewalk and pedestrian facilities requirements, draft amendment for the proposed historic resources overlay district in the zoning ordinance, draft amendment for storm water improvement overlay district in the zoning ordinance, and amendments to the Storm Water Management Ordinance.

The Planning Commission requested that the staff provide updates that detail ordinance revisions that are in process and their status.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.