

**Tredyffrin Township  
Planning Commission Workshop Meeting Minutes  
February 3, 2005**

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A workshop meeting of the Planning Commission was held on February 3, 2005, at the Tredyffrin Township Building. Members present included: Robert J. O'Leary, Chairman, Sean N. McCauley, Vice Chairman, J. Thomas Cooper, Edward C. Sweeney, Marlen Kokaz, Giovanni D'Amato and Michael Tierney.

Members absent: Victoria Snyder and Libby Brinton.

Also present: Joseph A. Janasik, Township Manager, Mimi Gleason, Assistant Township Manager and William J. Bryant, Township Engineer/Director of Public Works.

Chairman O'Leary called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

**Environmental Advisory Council Update**

Mr. Sweeney reported that Saint David's Golf Club was on the EAC's February agenda in order to obtain a recommendation for their proposed removal of a Beech Tree as a result of the addition to their club house, but was not present at the meeting. Therefore, they will be placed on the March agenda and the EAC will issue a recommendation at that time.

Other pertinent EAC issues were discussed, including a new initiative appointing EAC members as liaisons to neighboring townships in an effort to glean information on shared interests and issues. Also, the EAC is assisting staff with consideration of the stormwater ordinance to ensure that it complies with both federal (NPDES II) and state regulations. Mr. Bryant said that a member of the EAC is working to compare the Township's current stormwater ordinance with a model ordinance produced by DEP. No new drafting will occur at this time, the aim is to determine what portions of the Township ordinance should be strengthened and to anticipate changes that will need to be made in the future. Finally, with the widening of the PA Turnpike, the EAC stated that some method of lobbying would need to occur in order to ensure that the Turnpike Commission fully considers stormwater issues.

**The following topics were discussed from a conceptual and design perspective. No action was taken on any item listed below:**

1. **(Application 27-04) Trammell Crow Northeast Metro Development:** Petition to rezone the property in the Atwater Office Park at Church Road and south Atwater Drive from Planned Industrial Park (PIP) and R-1/2 Districts to Professional (P) District [Plan prepared by Chester Valley Engineers, Inc., dated 12/10/04].
  - Two main issues exist: first, the matter of rezoning the property and second, text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance for the Planned Industrial Park (PIP) District (discussed in item 2).
  - In regards to rezoning the property, currently its majority is zoned as a PIP District, with 2 parts of the parcel zoned as R ½ . It was suggested that these portions be rezoned to PIP in order for the entire property to fall under one zoning district.
  - Ms. Gleason referred the members to the GIS map that was distributed prior to the meeting that graphically displays this zoning change.
  - The Commission agreed that they would be able to make a recommendation at their next regular meeting.

2 Amend buffer, parking and height regulations for office uses in the Planned Industrial Park (PIP) District.

- Here, the three main text changes to the Zoning Ordinance for the PIP District were discussed. A copy of the proposed changes was handed out to all members.
  - First, was the proposed change to building height. Currently the ordinance states that “the height of any building shall not exceed three stories or 35 feet.” Ms. Gleason explained that a more standard height for a three story building is 40 feet and that it would make sense to change the maximum height of the building to 40 feet and to change the bonus maximum (“if a roof or parapet detail is used to screen roof-mounted equipment”) to 45 feet. This change was supported by the Commission.
  - Next, issues regarding parking were discussed. It was proposed that the first item in section F (“No parking or loading area shall be permitted on any lot between the street line and the front line of the building”) be stricken from the ordinance. This regulation is unnecessarily strict and can be interpreted differently depending on the specific instance. Parking would still not be allowed in the “required yard” area. In order to preserve the goals of the first item in section F, a distinction could be made between exterior public streets and interior office park streets. By changing the required yard for each of these categories, the impact of a parking lot to the public roadway would be small and the ability to provide a suitable amount of spaces would be possible. It was noted that although there are currently two areas in the Township that are zoned as PIP (both office parks), the proposed changes would only apply to office uses in PIP Districts.
  - Finally, as a result of the proposed changes to parking regulations, buffers and required yard sizes were discussed. A reasonable size for the required yard from interior office park streets was suggested to be 60 feet, and from exterior public streets to be 150 feet. This would provide ample screening from roadways and protect the surrounding property owners (mainly large residential properties in the R ½ District). Also, an addition to item four in section F could require buffers and substantial screening “from view of the property line or all exterior public street lines.”
- These changes will officially go before the Planning Commission for recommendation at their next regular meeting.

3. Amendment to Section 108-107 of the Special Average Density Provisions.

- Ms. Gleason reported that the subcommittee had met to discuss these provisions, and that the Township solicitor’s opinion had been obtained. The two main issues to be discussed are the change of the by-right minimum area of the tract of land from thirty acres to ten acres, and the limiting of impervious surface on the open space land to 5%.
  - The first issue regarding changing the minimum area of the tract of land to ten acres was agreed upon.
  - It was suggested that the impervious surface regulation was perhaps too restrictive, as the best use for the open space land may dictate that a higher level of impervious surface be necessary. If it is appropriate and the site presents an opportunity for such a use, that use should be considered. This can be done through conditional use provisions that protect the integrity of the surrounding properties through screening and buffer requirements. The Commission then opted to suggest a 5% maximum impervious coverage by-right, with conditional use allowing up to 10%. This conditional use provision will be particularly useful in instances where a historic building or structure is on the open space land.
- A draft of these changes will be provided to the members of the Commission in their next packet and discussed at the next meeting.

**Zoning Ordinance Subcommittee Update**

Update about the progress of the subcommittee working on the revision of the entire Zoning Ordinance and review of residential zoning districts.

- The Subcommittee, which includes staff, Mr. O’Leary, Mr. McCauley, and Ms. Snyder, has been spending a lot of time trying to bring consistency to the current Zoning Ordinance. Since the document has been amended so many times by many different Township staff members and Planning Commission members, it is often hard to interpret.
- The process by which the new Zoning Ordinance would be adopted would be to first come before the Planning Commission for a recommendation that would be given to the Board of Supervisors. Then the Board of Supervisors holds as many public hearings as they deem necessary before considering the document for adoption. Since the Zoning Ordinance is such a large document, Ms. Gleason will begin explaining the completed portions in sections and highlight the main changes informally at workshop sessions so that the Planning Commission members have some knowledge of the new document before it comes to them in its entirety for a recommendation.
- The first section to be covered will be Residential Districts.
  - As stormwater is a major issue, limits on impervious coverage (currently only in some districts) will be strengthened. The “maximum impervious coverage” requirements will be inverted to “minimum ‘green’ areas” (for example, what is now a maximum impervious coverage regulation of 15% will be inverted to a minimum green area of 85%). Often, what is and is not impervious coverage is debated, so this change should clarify the Township’s intent and prevent disagreements.
  - Ms. Gleason explained that the minimum lot sizes are the largest in Rural Conservation Districts, followed by R ½ Districts. As the number after the “R” increases, the density of the area increases.
  - Similar to the previous discussion on building height in PIP Districts, there is also a proposed change to increase the height limit on residential properties from three stories or 35 feet to 40 feet (number of stories omitted). As mentioned before, this is a more standard height for a three story structure.
  - Ms. Gleason added that two unique zoning districts were the Planned Apartment District and the Office/Apartment District. They are different from the other residential districts mentioned.
  - Mr. McCauley mentioned that the Township may want to consider regulating the length of town homes as there is currently no provision that deals with how many town homes may be attached in a row.
  - Also, since the only main opportunities left in the Township to preserve large parcels of open space exist in the RC District, allowing clustering here should be considered. The possibility of this will be discussed further in the subcommittee.

**Stormwater 101 – Review of stormwater management regulations**

Bill Bryant was present to explain how a site is assessed in terms of stormwater management. There are two main methods by which stormwater issues are measured: the Soil Cover Complex Method and the Rational Method. The Soil Cover Complex Method is an intense study by the Soil Conservation Service that uses different variables to determine the peak discharge and peak rate of flow for different frequencies of storms. The Rational Method is less involved and uses hand calculations and formulas to determine stormwater runoff.

A brief discussion ensued regarding detention basins and some of the theory and methods of sizing. Mr. Bryant then handed out a sheet of highlights from the Township’s current stormwater ordinance. This highlight sheet can also be found on the Township Website.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alison Smith  
Recording Secretary