

**Tredyffrin Township
Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes
December 21, 2006**

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission was held on December 21, 2006 at the Tredyffrin Township Building. Members present included: Robert O'Leary, Chairman, Sean N. McCauley, Vice Chairman, Edward C. Sweeney, Thomas J. Cooper, Giovanni D'Amato, Marlen Kokaz, Michael Tierney, and Victoria Snyder.

Members absent: Libby Brinton.

Also present: Mike Fahey, Zoning and Building Officer, Stephen Burgo, P.E., Township Engineer, and Mimi Gleason, Township Manager.

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman O'Leary called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion made by Mr. O'Leary, seconded by Mr. McCauley to approve the December 7, 2006 workshop and the November 16, 2006 regular meeting minutes.

NEW MATTER:

(Application #20-06) **Arc Wheeler**; Zoning Ordinance Amendment: Proposal to amend the Township Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map for an assemblage of parcels located between US Route 30 on the North, Pennsylvania Avenue on the south, Glenn Avenue on the east and Longcourse Lane on the west.

- Steve Aichelle, attorney for the applicant, presented information on the proposed project including architectural renderings and reasons why a TNDOD (Traditional Neighborhood Development Overlay District) was a good choice for the area. He sighted several local and regional plans that Arc Wheeler had taken into account when designing the project:
 1. The Chester County Planning Commission's "Landscapes" plan is the Chester County Comprehensive Plan Policy Element which was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on July 12, 1996. It calls for a change in the pattern of development that has occurred in the County for the last twenty years, and presents a program for making that change. The program made two major suggestions. One, that municipalities secure open space and secondly, that growth be channeled toward urban areas and existing infrastructure.
 2. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission has endorsed Transit Oriented Development (TOD). They define it as follows: "Transit-oriented development (TOD) is compact, mixed use development within an easy walk of a transit station. Its pedestrian-oriented design encourages residents and workers to drive their cars less and ride mass transit more. These "transit villages" are usually moderate to high density, matching the existing scale of development, and can be new construction or redevelopment. Mixed uses include residential, commercial, and office, or some combination."
 3. Tredyffrin Township is drafting a new comprehensive plan which encourages development closer to existing infrastructure.
 4. The demographics of Tredyffrin Township are changing. Many residents are "empty nesters" who want to stay in the Township but downsize to a smaller home. The Arc Wheeler development could meet that demand. Young, two income couples could also buy a starter home in the development where the average price of a unit would be in the \$450,000 range.

- After studying the materials listed above, Arc Wheeler concluded that the fourteen acre site located between US Route 30 on the North, Pennsylvania Avenue on the south, Glenn Avenue on the east and Longcourse Lane on the west was an ideal location for a TNDOD. They have assembled a world class team of architects, engineers, economic impact specialists, and transit way experts who feel that this could be an “impact” project which would improve the Daylesford train station and surrounding area along Route 30. It could also serve as a “gateway” to changes that would update and improve the Paoli business district as supported by proposed revisions to the Tredyffrin Township Zoning Ordinance.
- Graham Wyatt, architect for the project, noted that meetings with residents of the surrounding neighborhood had been held in June and August of 2006. As a result of these meetings, the plans had gone through several revisions. He presented renderings of what the most current plan would look like. The neighbors stated that they had moved to the community for the large lots and pastoral feel and did not want the high density being proposed. Because of this, Arc Wheeler decided to reduce the number of units from 176 to 152 and to have three double and one single house facing onto Pennsylvania Avenue and four single homes facing onto Longcourse Lane. All of these units would have private yards. The portion of the property fronting on Lancaster Avenue would become a mixed use area containing both retail and residential uses. It would be known as Station Square and have buildings of three or four stories in height with underground parking. A new road would come from Station Square and loop through the community with a public green inside of the loop. North of the new road would be four story apartment buildings with underground parking, while south of it would be quadrangles of townhomes with walkable courtyards. Current residents could use the courtyards to access the public green and Station Square. The new loop road would meet Pennsylvania Avenue but would be configured to have a right in and left out only turn thus avoiding traffic traveling through the neighborhood.
- Bob Thomas spoke about improvements that could be made to the Daylesford station and the surrounding area along Lancaster Avenue. His suggestions include construction of new enclosed and heated station houses, painting and lighting the bridge over Glen Avenue, terrace and landscape the embankment coming down from the tracks to Lancaster Avenue, hide utility poles and lines by putting utilities underground, and create wide, landscaped walkways along Lancaster Avenue in front of Station Square.
- Bill Bryant PE, from Pennoni Associates Inc., stated that stormwater could all be controlled on site and details would be provided once formal plans were submitted as part of the land development application. Jim Marknam PE, also from Pennoni, addressed the traffic issues. He talked about the traffic study that had been conducted and submitted a hard copy of the study to the Planning Commission. He noted several improvements designed to mitigate any traffic problems. They included a dedicated left turn lane from Lancaster Avenue onto the proposed site, a full access driveway for the site along Lancaster Avenue, and the restricted turns where the road from the development meets Pennsylvania Avenue. The applicant also submitted a second traffic study performed by Horner and Canter Associates. The data and conclusions are the same as those of the Pennoni study.
- The applicant had the Weitzman Group do research on property values for the residences of Daylesford and Oak Knoll. Several conclusions were drawn, including the fact that single family homes in the Daylesford area appreciate more rapidly than homes in the broader market despite their proximity to the higher density units at Oak Knoll. Third party research also supports the finding that well placed and well designed higher density development can actually increase the overall value of detached houses nearby. Concerns about a decrease in property values are not supported by the research data.
- Finally, Steve Mullin, from E Consultants, presented findings on the impact of the development to the various taxing authorities involved. The conclusion was that the school district could realize approximately \$500,000, the Township \$118,000, and the County \$250,000 of additional revenue from such a development.
- After compiling all of the research and information mentioned above, Arc-Wheeler feels strongly that a zoning amendment to allow a TNDOD near the Daylesford train station would be a benefit to all involved.
- Mr. O’Leary noted that the applicant had mentioned the Chester County Landscapes plan and the Tredyffrin Township Comprehensive Plan as support for the project. He asked Ms. Gleason, Township Manager, how the proposed TNDOD at Daylesford would fit conceptually into those two plans. Ms. Gleason suggested that Chester County would be best to comment on the fit within the Landscapes plan. The Chester County plan does talk about saving open space and redirecting development. It divides the county into different “landscapes” and makes recommendations based on the type of area. Tredyffrin is identified as a suburban landscape while Paoli is an urban landscape. As far as the Comprehensive Plan for Tredyffrin Township, Ms. Gleason said that a steering committee has been formed to review and update the current plan. Part of the process will be to look at all the

types of housing in Tredyffrin and the needs for housing in the future. Development will occur over the next twenty years and decisions will have to be made about where to direct it. However, at this time, the process has just begun; and a draft will probably not be ready until late summer or early fall. The target for finalizing the plan would be the end of 2007.

- Mr. D'Amato, a member of the Planning Commission, asked to address some of his concerns about the proposed development. He stated that the applicant had shown examples of successful TOD (Transit Oriented Development) developments in Chicago, Illinois and Greenwich, Connecticut. He asked how either of them resembled the Daylesford neighborhood. Mr. D'Amato questioned how the project had gone from developing around Duffy's to encompassing fourteen single family residences in an R1 residential district. The applicant responded that they had looked into putting a by right use like a large retail store on the Duffy property but felt that was not good planning. They began to look into a different way to develop the parcel and felt that a TOD would be a much better use. It made sense to use the natural street boundaries to define the TOD area. Mr. D'Amato noted that the developer had used the Chester County Landscapes plan and the Paoli Master Plan as support for their proposal. In reality, neither plan supports what Arc-Wheeler is proposing. Landscapes talks about moving development closer to suburban centers and urban areas. The Daylesford neighborhood is classified as a suburban area in that plan, while, Paoli, where rezoning is taking place, is designated as an urban area. The Paoli Master Plan only addresses the area one mile east and west and one half mile north and south of the existing Paoli train station. The Daylesford neighborhood is not included. Page 6.12 of the Paoli plan also states "all of the areas currently devoted to single family detached housing surrounding the areas designated for non-residential or multi-family and town house developments are designated to remain in single family detached residential use." Mr. D'Amato feels the proposal equates to suburban strip mining and puts all residential neighborhoods at risk for down zoning. He will not support any overlay or rezoning of the current R1 residence district.
- Mr. Sweeney felt the plan as a concept was fine, however, he questioned if it really fit the Daylesford area. There are many train stations along the Route 30 corridor and not all lend themselves to development as a TOD. He asked if a specific plan for rebuilding the station enclosure had been submitted to SEPTA for their input. Mr. Aichelle explained that it had not because private funds would probably have to be put forth by the developer for a new enclosure. This could not happen until Arc-Wheeler knew that the development would be built. In response to the question of traffic passing under the bridge across Old Lancaster, Arc-Wheeler will take a look at the numbers. Mr. Sweeney stated that zoning gives residents expectations of what can be built in their neighborhoods, and they buy into it based on those expectations. Rezoning an area is not a light matter and must be done with great thought.
- Ms. Snyder also questioned the feasibility of the area for a TOD. There is nothing else around to walk to and support the new Station Square. Also, would ridership really increase at the Daylesford train station as a result of this development? She asked if the developer had studied the number of Oak Knoll residents who actually ride the train and wondered who had better access to the train station, Oak Knoll or the new development. Ms. Snyder noted that the draft zoning ordinance which had been submitted would need a major rewrite to support the type of plan being presented. Tonight seemed more like a plan review than an ordinance review, and yet a zoning ordinance change is what will be needed first.
- Mr. Tierney noted that Arc-Wheeler was proposing to take fourteen existing single family homes plus Duffys Catering and turn them into 152 residential units plus retail space. This is a 1,000% increase in residential density. So far, nothing has been said to get him over the hump of the 1,000% increase. The Planning Commission is not often asked to change zoning, and the communities' feelings should be strongly considered when making a decision about rezoning.
- Ms. Kokaz asked what kind of traffic model had been used and was told that it was Penonni's own design based on a traffic count in the spring before school let out. She asked if any traffic demand modeling or Syncro software had been used and was told no.
- Mr. McCauley felt that the plan being presented was a "new urbanism". You pick a spot close to a train station and make it into a TOD. By this logic, all of the Lancaster Avenue corridor from Paoli to Berwyn could be rezoned for higher density mixed use development not just this particular thirteen acre parcel. He stated that the development would probably draw families with children who want to send those children to the excellent schools. Arc-Wheeler says they are targeting empty nesters but Mr. McCauley felt they would have to age restrict in order to accomplish this.

A recent article in the Philadelphia Inquirer said that empty nesters are moving into the city where they can walk to the store and the theater. Where would people walk in this proposed community? They don't even walk from one side of Paoli Shopping Center to the other. Finally, Mr. McCauley noted that the argument of preserving open space by pushing development toward urban areas only works in a community where there is a vast amount of open space. It does not work in a fully developed community like Tredyffrin Township. This proposal seems like the developer is just throwing density on a piece of property near a whistle stop train station.

- Mr. O'Leary, Chairman of the Planning Commission, stated that he had received many, many letters and emails from the neighborhood residents. All had similar concerns about traffic, density, property value, etc. The message was loud and clear that the residents who will be affected by the proposed development are adamantly opposed to any rezoning of their R1 neighborhood. At this point he invited the public to express their view.
- Louise Catalaro, who lives on Pennsylvania Avenue, said that she was one of the residents with whom Arc-Wheeler had an agreement to purchase their residence. At the time of agreement, they had been told that the development would consist of 55 senior housing units. Now there will be 3 and 4 story apartment buildings behind them with several townhome units occupying the lot which is now just their single family home. She felt that the whole thing had been misrepresented in order to convince them to be willing to sell their property to Arc-Wheeler.
- Mary Ann Pachone, who also lives on Pennsylvania Avenue, said that she and her family liked the single family detached homes on an acre. It was the reason that most of the neighbors had bought in the area. She noted that traffic from the development would not use Glenn Avenue to access Lancaster Avenue but would instead use Glenn as a way to avoid the congestion there, especially at rush hour.
- Frank Kiser, President of the neighborhood association, stated that the plans had changed from an original number of about 50 units to 176 units as presented in July 2006. The residents feel that this is way too dense for the area and want to send a clear message that they do not support rezoning to accommodate this density. The ingress and egress from Pennsylvania Avenue is also unacceptable. He asked how the proposed development could be considered a TOD. A TOD is supposed to lower traffic because fewer people will need cars. They can walk to public transportation and stores in the neighborhood. However, the developer has allotted 2.2 cars per unit which would total about 330 additional cars for the thirteen acre tract. How is this in any way lowering traffic? At 2.2 cars per unit, the existing fourteen homes only have 31 cars. There is a considerable difference between 330 and 31. Finally, when the DVRPC (Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission) talks about TOD, they recommend putting them in urban areas that need revitalization. They give examples of run down business areas and old factories being converted to new mixed use buildings. They never suggested it apply to an R1 residence district. The developer is showing lovely pictures based on assumptions and forecasts. Who knows what the reality would be. The current R1 zoning has produced an existing reality, the Daylesford neighborhood, and the residents want it to remain that way. If
- Arc-Wheeler wants to demolish the single family homes on which they have an equitable agreement and build new single family homes, the neighbors would support it wholeheartedly.
- Dick Goalwin of Greenlawn Avenue presented information which showed that there was no precedent for rezoning an R1 district in the past 45 years. He reiterated that the Daylesford area was classified as suburban by the Landscapes plan. He noted that the DVRPC report had identified 45 stations along the R5 line and selected those that they felt would lend themselves to Transit Oriented Development. Berwyn, Paoli, and Ardmore made the A list while Devon, Malvern, and Radnor made the B list. Daylesford was not included as a possible site for TOD. Mr. Goalwin surveyed the Oak Knoll residents and found that 11% take the train and 57% drive to work and other activities. He also felt that the school system was the biggest draw to the area not the train station. This would influence the demographics of people moving in to include more families.
- Jeff Beale of PA Avenue stated that the plan was actually inconsistent with the Landscapes plan and the Paoli Master Plan. He noted that a TOD does not have 2 parking spaces per unit. That defeats the purpose. He also said that the developer had only requested two meetings with residents of the neighborhood.
- Mark Adamiak of Berwyn Paoli Road said that he had done a survey of 80 residents from the Daylesford neighborhood. Of those 80, 70 drove their cars to the train station and only 10 walked. It is a myth of TOD that people walk. They don't.
- Beth Lake from Longcourse Lane felt that rezoning the area from R1 could be considered "spot zoning".

- Tom O’Grady questioned who was going to pay for the \$600,000 to \$2,000,000 worth of improvements being shown on the drawings.
- Frank Hahn and Mike Harris of Fairway Road both spoke in opposition to the rezoning and proposed development.
- Sam Wheeler of Timber Lane identified himself as a relative of the applicant and a 25 year resident of Tredyffrin Township. He mentioned the Lionville-Exton area where growth has been explosive and traffic congestion is horrible. He favors “smart growth” to help avoid such a situation.
- Joe Aurillio from Mountainview Road also favored TOD development in the Township.
- Finally, Joe Devanity, who has his house under agreement with Arc Wheeler, stated that the sellers had never been duped. Arc Wheeler had been very clear about the project from the beginning. He also wondered if any of the business men and women from the Paoli area had expressed an opinion about the development. He suggested that some of them be included in future discussions.
- At this point, Mr. O’Leary pointed out how issues of this magnitude had been handled in the past. He said that the Planning Commission would form a subcommittee to study the proposal and meet with the developer as well as the residents. The Planning Commission members were polled to see if they favored forming a subcommittee.
- Mr. Tierney said that he is opposed to the rezoning and any subcommittee to study it.
- Mr. D’Amato is also opposed to a subcommittee because he is absolutely against any rezoning of the R1 district in question.
- Members Cooper, Sweeney, McCauley, O’Leary, Snyder and Kokaz were in favor of forming a subcommittee because of the many serious questions that need to be answered. Mr. Cooper, Mr. Sweeney, and Ms. Snyder volunteered to represent the Planning Commission on the subcommittee. Mr. O’Leary asked the residents to choose two or three people to represent their group. Arc-Wheeler will also be represented.

Action: None

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 PM.
Respectfully Submitted,

Carol O’Neill
Recording Secretary