Dover Township  
Planning Commission Minutes  
September 1, 2010

Chairman Wayne Hoffman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members present: Monica Love, Bill Hansman, Anthony Pinto, and alternates Amy Brinton and Eric Harlacher. Robert Wright was absent. Also present: Zoning Officer Georgia Sprenkel, Solicitor John Baranski, Engineers Terry Myers and Karen Wilson, Recording Secretary, and no citizens.

I. Minutes  
Motion by Love, second by Pinto, to approve the minutes of the meeting of August 4, 2010. All members voted aye; motion carried.

II. Plans  
No plans this month.

III. Zoning Cases  
No cases this month.

IV. Other Business  
Discussion was held on Energy-Related Uses for the Zoning Ordinance. What is the purpose of this part of the ordinance? Partly to provide standards for those applicants who wish to apply for permission to bring an alternative energy business to the Township. This is one of the special exception uses in the conservation and agricultural zones. Mr. Myers confirmed the definition of the energy-related uses. The Township must allow for energy-related uses in the ordinance. There’s now a distinction between energy-generating facilities and an accessory use of solar panels and/or windmills with an existing use on a particular lot.

Primary use as compared with an accessory use will be determined by the percentage of the energy generated that is consumed on-site. Mr. Pinto had a question on the “administration” of the energy use as included in the definitions; the administration building would have to be in a certain zone, like the industrial zone.

Discussion was held on a bio-diesel plant and in which zone it would be best permitted. Should soybean oil be excluded from the language? If a farmer wanted to actually process bio-diesel fuel on his farm, he’d need to set aside a minimum of five acres for that use, per the ordinance. Mr. Hoffman gave a scenario relating to a farmer adding a methane-processing facility to his farm; how would the Township respond to that request? How about a facility for research, development, and testing? In what zone should that be permitted? Are these uses/definitions only for manufacturing?

Is there a distinction between a solar panel farm and several solar panels on someone’s barn? Mr. Myers feels that it depends upon how the energy is used – for the property owner’s use or for sale. He also suggested that the Township can look at any of the energy uses through that lens. How is the Zoning Officer to know if the
owner is selling more than 50% of the energy created? That will affect her handling of the application and subsequent enforcement.

Identify the principal uses that need separate regulations: methane plant; solar farm; wind farm; incinerator; bio-diesel; ethanol, or similar bio-fuel facility. Everyone agreed on the above list! The ordinance will certainly include definitions for each of these uses.

So, in which zones will these uses be permitted by Special Exception? Methane plant – Agricultural and Conservation zones. How about extra traffic? Roads must be able to support the traffic associated with this use. Solar farm – Industrial, Business Park, Commercial, Agricultural zones. Wind farm – Conservation zone. Incinerator – Industrial. Bio-diesel, ethanol, similar bio-fuel facility – Industrial or Business Park, Commercial zones. Also, should these uses be inside the areas with public water in order to protect any nearby wells?

The staff will define the uses, add them to a 600-Section (specific standards for uses), and also add to the “accessory structure” section information spelling out wind, solar, and some other alternative, accessory uses. The Planning Commission will see a draft before the next meeting.

It was suggested to adopt the sample restrictions from the Washington Township, Berks County, information, such as height, abandonment, noise, etc.

Motion by Love, second by Hansman, to adjourn. All members voted aye; motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie B. Maher,
Recording Secretary