

Dover Township
 Planning Commission Minutes
 February 2, 2022

Acting Chairman Wayne Hoffman called the regular Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members present: Anthony Pinto, Eric Harlacher, Justin Bigham; alternates Mark Miller, and Stephen Stefanowicz. Absent: Brian Kimball. Also present: Solicitor John Baranski, Zoning Officer John McLucas, Engineers Terry Myers and Cory McCoy, Recording Secretary, and four citizens.

I. **Reorganization**

Motion by Pinto, second by Harlacher, to nominate Wayne Hoffman as Chairman of the Planning Commission for 2022. All members voted aye; motion carried.

Motion by Bigham, second by Pinto, to nominate Eric Harlacher as Vice Chairman of the Planning Commission for 2022. All members voted aye; motion carried.

Motion by Harlacher, second by Pinto, to nominate Justin Bigham as Secretary of the Planning Commission for 2022. All members voted aye; motion carried.

II **Minutes**

Motion by Bigham, second by Miller, to approve the minutes of the meeting of December 1, 2021. All members voted aye; motion carried.

Mr. McLucas reported that Brian Kimball was, by his request, not reappointed to the Planning Commission for another term. It was noted that Mr. Miller will be a voting member for tonight's meeting. Mr. Miller is interested in being an official member of the Planning Commission, and indeed, the Board of Supervisors appointed him at their last meeting.

Motion by Pinto, second by Miller, to send a letter to Brian Kimball thanking him for his service on the Planning Commission. All members voted aye; motion carried. Mr. McLucas will see to this.

Chairman Hoffman noted that in the last two years or so, the Planning Commission encountered a few very different topics of interest -- tiny homes, solar farms, short-term rentals, livestock in residential zones. It is the Planning Commission's job to look at the big picture and consider the long-term ramifications of all the applications. On the solar farm topic, did the Planning Commission do its due diligence in recommending approval? Mr. Stefanowicz reported, from his attendance at the Zoning Hearings about the solar farm, that residents are discussing solar farms giving off vibes, reflections, etc. There was almost no discussion of anything like that at the Planning Commission meetings. One of the biggest complaints at the Zoning Hearings on the solar farm issue has been that the public was not informed of the zoning ordinance progression. At least the Planning Commission/Supervisors made the solar ordinance permitted by Special Exception. If the Township didn't have a proper ordinance in place, the solar applicant would have been able to do more with no restrictions, etc. To Mr. Stefanowicz's point, if people at the Zoning Hearing are bringing up "strange" issues, they have to prove their case next.

III. **Zoning Cases**

None this month. NOTE: The 11/17/21, 12/15/21, and 1/19/22 ZHB case for Principal Solar Energy System has been continued to February 16, 2022, at the Dover Area Middle School, 46 West Canal Road.

III. **Plans**

None this month.

IV. **Other Business**

Public comment – nothing at this time.

V. **Ordinances**

Planned Residential Development (PRD) – a joint meeting was held on June 28, 2021, with the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and Industrial and Commercial Development Committee. Several PRD sites were visited and an overview from HRG has been provided for discussion.

Chairman Hoffman disclosed that he is a member of the Hilton Avenue Land Partners, which is associated with the PRD. Because of that relationship, he turned the meeting over to Vice Chairman Harlacher.

Mr. McLucas reviewed how we got to this point. Preliminary comments and feedback are sought from the Planning Commission tonight.

Covid-19 has changed the housing market forever, it is said. More and more people are working from home, and they still want access to commercial space and recreational opportunities. Examples within the Township: The Seasons and Copper Chase; for high-end renters. The market is driving this type of renter/property. Mr. McLucas showed growth projections for the next five years. He noted that the Township has or has had a PRD ordinance, when Honey Run development was in the works, but that ordinance has since been discontinued. The area in question is at the intersection of Bull Road and Hilton Avenue. The proposal of the PRD goes hand in hand with the presentation of an ordinance to permit such a use. This is a commercial zone which doesn't permit this type of community. A PRD ordinance wouldn't change the underlying zone, it would just permit this type of use.

Mr. McLucas outlined the field trip that the staff took to see the various PRD sites in New Britain, Dublin Borough, Manheim Township. The New Britain community includes a consistent architectural style throughout the development, and it is all commercial use.

The Dublin Borough community was also mostly commercial. The Bedminster Square community is strictly residential, with home values averaging \$450K to \$500K.

Richmond Square/Manheim Township was mixed residential and commercial use. From the audience, Joe Eisenhower (with Inch and Company), in response to the observation from the Planning Commission that no photos show anyone out for a walk, corroborated that there's never anyone out walking in this community. Theory and practice are different things, he said. He also said, "Manheim Township is just a Township of sprawl." Keep in mind that it might look great from the outside, but it's not all that great. He feels that this use isn't a good fit for that particular rural area.

HRG's recommendations include a pedestrian design approach, open space design, community green, vertical mix of uses, gateways and focal points, mix of residential product, architectural design standards based on a visual preference survey, minimum provisions, block and street layout parking and pedestrian improvements.

Paul Minnich, Mark Roberts, and Joe Eisenhower were present on this proposal. Mr. Eisenhower presented the concept of the PRD for the Hilton/Bull intersection. Included in the proposal is a sports facility area, a mix of single-family homes and multi-family homes, a retail center with perhaps a convenience store and a restaurant, etc. The idea is to attract residents from the development as well as from outside this development.

Mr. Minnich noted that this PRD would provide some desired limits and customizations for the use of the property.

Are there other locations within the Township that would be suitable for a PRD under this proposed ordinance? And would there be a minimum acreage requirement? Perhaps 50 acres would be the minimum.

Is this bypassing the conditional use of this zone? A conditional use is basically a special exception. How is this not spot zoning? Because it can be applied to any property that meets the requirements. How does this ordinance get to be a conditional use and the other ordinances don't get that option? With a conditional use, there's a give-and-take between the applicant and the municipality.

Does the Township want every PRD to have a commercial component?

Next step? What characteristics of the communities does the Township want to include? The Board of Supervisors has already suggested that it be developed. Mr. Bigham asked what assurances does the Township have that the commercial tenants will actually show up to this site? He suggested that the Township get the public involved early, before the passing of the ordinance. Can this property just be rezoned residential? But perhaps the owner was holding onto the property because commercial uses are "coming up Bull Road" and there was hope of a purchaser. Would it ever be feasible for the Township itself to invest in this property and deal with the nasty intersection?

How long might this entire process take? If Mr. Eisenhower can do it the way he wants to, the residential portion might take four years, the commercial aspect, about the same. Point to consider, if the public gets involved with comments, etc., that process will take much longer. It seems that the applicant is interested in a quick turn-around. Mr. Pinto says either this property is viable as a commercial use or it's not. If it's not, how about changing the zoning to residential and put it into use. He's tired of permitting multi-family units. He feels the Township is trying to shoehorn a use on this lot. He feels that the residents in the nearest development of high-priced homes will not be happy with this mixed-use project.

Is it possible to build multiple family units that look like single-family homes?

Mr. Eisenhower noted that they first presented this idea in June; then the Board of Supervisors voted to move forward. The project got bogged down for a number of reasons. Last week, the Board voted to authorize Mr. McLucas to work with the staff to draft an ordinance.

A draft of the ordinance will be presented to the Board of Supervisors, then they will pass it to the Planning Commission to review and comment. Then it will go to the YCPC, then back to the Board of Supervisors for a public meeting and action.

Mr. Pinto feels that he doesn't have anything to add to a discussion about this. He is not in favor of this proposal. He could give comments and still vote against it. The applicant, of course, would like to move ahead as quickly as possible.

What to include in this ordinance? Should Mr. McLucas provide the details of the appearance of the commercial and residential structures? Does the Planning Commission want to dictate that? Does the Planning Commission even want to delve into details right now? Mr. Eisenhower asked that he and his team be involved with the drafting of an ordinance.

Chairman Hoffman feels that the ordinance should be drafted, then decide how to put this PRD onto this property in question. If not acting on this ordinance, rezone the property to residential.

Stand by for a proposed ordinance governing a PRD in Dover Township.

Common Ownership Merger (COM) – *tabled*

Short-Term Rentals – a planning document from Lancaster County was provided at the March 3, and December 1, 2021, meetings. Staff is currently working on a draft ordinance to be shared with the Planning Commission upon completion.

Tiny Homes – *tabled*

Livestock in Residential Zones -- *tabled*

VI. **Correspondence**

None in this time.

Mr. McLucas requested the respect of using his input on ordinances that have been tabled or updates that come to him that he passes to the Planning Commission. Discussion was held on the need for multi-family housing or single-family housing. Mr. McLucas covered data and real estate trends showing that more multi-family housing may be necessary in the Township, within our existing or future growth boundary.

The next meeting will be held on March 9, 7 p.m. **NOTE the change from the regular meeting date!!**

Motion by Pinto, second by Bigham, to adjourn. All members voted aye; motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie B. Maher,
Recording Secretary