

WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

VIRTUAL MEETING (via Zoom Platform)
Wednesday, September 9, 2020 – 7:30PM

Present

Commissioners – All Planning Commission (PC) members were present. Also, present was Planning Director Will Ethridge and Township Planner Mila Robinson.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Hatton called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adoption of Agenda (SR/EA) 7-0

No changes were made.

Approval of Minutes

7/15/20 meeting minutes were approved. **(KF/EA) 6-0**

Elaine Adler noted that the meeting minutes of 7/8/2020 were never reviewed. After a brief discussion, the PC requested those meeting minutes to be placed on the next PC meeting agenda.

Announcements

- Mila Robinson reminded that BOS Crebilly/Toll Bros. CU Hearing #4 was scheduled on 9/14/20 at 7pm via ZOOM.
- Ms. Robinson announced that Oakbourne Park Master Plan Public Meeting was scheduled on 9/15/20 at 7pm via ZOOM
- Russ Hatton asked Will Ethridge about the letter that was included in the PC packets. Mr. Ethridge clarified that the Chester County Planning Commission (CCPC) notified the township when the development was proposed nearby the township boundary.
- Mr. Hatton recapped that there were ongoing discussions to improve live streaming capabilities of the meetings. He reminded that Tom Sennett drafted a recommendations letter to the BOS for their feedback. Mr. Ethridge announced that he was working with Dick Pomerantz, Supervisor, to make improvements to the Assembly Hall that would allow for a better public interaction during the meetings. He noted that he reached out to several municipalities for recommendations on software and hardware.

Public Comment – Non Agenda Items

None

New Business

1. Sketch Plan, 924 S. Concord Rd – Charles Dobson, Et al.

Wayne McGill, the developer and the builder, presented a sketch plan for 20 twin lots on the property located at 924 S. Concord Rd, in MU (Multi-Use) Zoning district. He believed that proposed plan provided the best option for U-shape roadway, plenty of buffer spacing, plenty of area for stormwater management, potential for sewer connection to the sewer pump station that was currently servicing Wild Goose Farm subdivision.

Mr. Hatton asked Mr. McGill what the word “attractive” meant to him. Mr. McGill explained

that they considered three options for the site: multifamily, standard style townhouses and twin homes, and ultimately decided on the twin home design due to setbacks and spacing that are more favorable under existing zoning. Mr. Rodia asked about the square footage of each unit. Mr. McGill clarified that that the buildings would be approximately 41- 42 ft. wide and 45 ft. deep to accommodate off-street parking in addition to two car garages and driveway spacing.

Charles Dobson, the applicant's engineer, summarized details of presented sketch plan. He noted the existing drainage features along the southwestern property line that were installed through an agreement between Nussbaumers, the existing property owners, and the Homeowners Association (HOA) for Wild Goose Farm to remediate a significant amount of runoff that was coming off the property and adversely affecting residential neighbors. Mr. Dobson explained, as a part of the proposed development runoff would be intercepted from the center of the property, where the most runoff would likely originate and be conveyed to the existing storm sewer system and to the detention basin located on the other side of Goose Creek. He added that twin lots would be a minimum of 4,800 sq. ft., and the plan included two open space areas. He explained that that agreement allowed for a 20-foot access easement along the property line that would allow the developer to run a sanitary sewer connection to the existing pump station. Mr. Dobson acknowledged that some residents might be sensitive to what it would mean to their properties and quality of life, at least during the construction time.

Steve Rodia raised a question regarding an access for firetrucks and other emergency vehicles considering the proposed on-street parking. Mr. Dobson reassured that there should not be any issues with emergency access, as determination for on-street parking was not made yet.

Mr. Rodia questioned whether there was any PennDOT regulation preventing having roads and access to the proposed development so close to each other. Mr. Dobson believed that as long as the requisite site distance was met for each of them, PennDOT would not have any concerns about that. Mr. Hatton wanted to know the distance of proposed access points to Pickett Way. Mr. Dobson assured to calculate those.

Kevin Flynn asked if the proposed plan had been shared with the neighbors. Mr. McGill responded it had not. PC members recommended the applicant to do so. Mr. Ethridge would share the HOA contact information with Mr. McGill.

Mr. Flynn expressed concern regarding the stormwater management on site due to already evident drainage issues caused by soils and the proximity to the creek. Mr. Dobson explained that the proposed development was not allowed to discharge any more volume or rate of water than existed today and that the existing inlets provided great points of connection to the storm sewer to avoid any of the issues relative to excessive water hitting neighboring houses.

Mr. Flynn asked the applicant if any variances would be needed to construct the project as it was presented. Mr. Dobson did not intend on needing any variances and intended on keeping waivers to a minimum.

Mr. Flynn was concerned about the blocking of traffic on S Concord Rd by school buses and the location of central mailboxes. Mr. McGill reassured that they would provide the best traffic flow as possible and they proposed to have centralized mailboxes.

Mr. Flynn asked if the sketch plan included any sidewalks along S Condor Rd. Mr. McGill confirmed that it did not, but pointed out proposed walking trails. Mr. Hatton recommended the applicant to consider streetlights.

Tom Sennett questioned the impervious coverage calculated on the presented sketch plan and raised his concerns regarding limitations on future individual property owners building decks and such in the future. Mr. Dobson clarified that those impervious calculations were based on individual lots not the entire development, which allowed for additional impervious coverage for an individual property owner. Mr. McGill pointed out that it was only a sketch plan and all those details would be cleared on final plans. Mr. Flynn suggested adding a condition limiting each individual owner to a certain number of sq. ft. of impervious coverage on his or her lot.

Mr. Sennett pointed out that the development was located close to Oakbourne Park and raised a question about connectivity to the park and adjacent neighborhoods. Mr. McGill explained that it was challenging to do so due to various reasons, but agreed to look into available options.

Mr. Hatton asked to clarify the ownership of the stormwater management facility. Mr. McGill confirmed the facility itself was owned by the Nussbaumers and ultimately by Wayne McGill and McGill Homes, and there were easement restrictions preventing to do certain things. He believed the facility was beneficial to the proposed development.

Elaine Adler questioned the designation of S Concord Rd and required setbacks. Mr. Ethridge confirmed it was classified as a collector road with a future right of way of 60 feet. Mr. Ethridge asked the applicant of any preliminary traffic study. Mr. Dobson responded that it was not done yet. Mr. Hatton questioned the validity of such traffic study considering most people working from home and closed schools due to COVID. Mr. McGill noted that they generally had an idea of how much traffic was generated by residential subdivisions.

Mr. Lees asked about building specifications, the living square footage and location of basements. Mr. McGill confirmed that the houses would have approximately 3,000 sq. ft. of living space, including garages. Mr. Dobson clarified that the basements would be located 9 - 10 feet below the finished floor and not underneath the garage.

Mr. Ethridge recommended the residents to reach out to the township to get in touch with Mr. McGill if they had any questions or concerns.

2. Discussion – Keeping of Animals Ordinance – John Snook

Mr. Hatton recapped that request to review the ordinance came from a resident having issues with his neighbor not cleaning up from his pet. He noted that John Snook was tasked with providing some guidance on potential ordinance amendments. Mr. Hatton made a point that the PC was looking for stronger language that would require animal owners to keep their pets under control and not to include language related to keeping of chickens.

John Snook questioned the decision regarding the chickens. Mr. Hatton clarified that the PC tried to get a chicken ordinance a few years back and received a lot of pushback.

Mr. Snook summarized examples of ordinances from neighboring municipalities and recommended the PC to decide what is missing from the existing ordinance that could be added. He also suggested considering the differentiation between large and small residential properties, provisions to noise ordinance, prohibition of exotic wildlife, and a section on how many animals would be permitted.

3. Sign Ordinance Amendment – Mr. Ethridge

Mr. Ethridge explained that there were several word omissions in the proposed sign ordinance amendments previously sent to the CCPC that had to be revised and resubmitted to the CCPC for Act 247 review.

Motion to approve recommended changes to the sign ordinance. RH/KF (7-0)

Old Business

None

Public Comment

James Mancuso, 929 Trellis Lane, asked Mr. McGill to clarify on his comment regarding the location of stormwater easement and its impact on existing houses. Mr. McGill corrected that he was talking about the sanitary sewer not stormwater facility and the fact that some of the existing properties would be affected by running a sanitary line from the pump station along the back of those properties. Mr. Mancuso also asked to clarify the existing easement that was located behind his house. Mr. Dobson referred to the copy of recorded plans, which he believed showed, a 20-foot open space easement running across the back of existing houses; however, he acknowledged more investigation was needed. Mr. Mancuso wondered about the timeframe. Mr. McGill pointed out the timeframe depended on the waiver process and other factors, but he believed it would take between 14-18 months for a plan to be approved and approximately 3 years for completion.

Marie Kozak, 634 Pickett Way, asked the PC to respond to her email submitted prior to the meeting. Mr. Hatton summarized her concerns regarding the proposed development, including the density of 20 units (10 buildings) on 6 acres, close proximity to the existing houses, additional impervious coverage and roadway safety. Mr. Hatton pointed out that the proposed was only a sketch plan and there would be an opportunity for public feedback during the process. Mr. McGill acknowledged the concerns and believed that could make improvements to the site plan to address some of those.

Craig Hatton, 632 Pickett Way, asked the applicant to clarify on the landscaping shown on the plan. Mr. Dobson explained that the intent would be to create a heavy buffer. Mr. Hatton also raised a concern about the existing issue with flooding and asked about the direction of the existing stormwater inlets. Mr. Dobson believed that the existing inlets were connected to the storm sewer system in Trellis Lane and pointed out that the intent was to control the stormwater underground.

Tom Foster, 734 Westbourne Rd, questioned the reason to amend the ordinance in relevance to agricultural animals. Mr. Hatton clarified that Mr. Snook was just presenting the ordinance samples to the PC and no decision was being made.

Reports

Board of Supervisors Meeting 9/8/20 – Jack Embick / Kevin Flynn

Adjournment (JE/RH) 7-0

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Mila Robinson,
Planner