

**Minutes from the
DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting**

November 23, 2015

The Doylestown Township Planning Commission Regular Meeting was held at 7:00 p.m., Monday, November 23, 2015 in the Doylestown Township Municipal Building, 425 Wells Road, Doylestown, PA. Members of the Planning Commission in attendance included Vice Chairman; Thomas Kelso. Members; George Lowenstein, Edward Redfield and Ed Harvey. Others in attendance included Township Manager; Stephanie J. Mason, Board of Supervisor Liaison; Richard F. Colello, and Township Planning Consultant; Judy Stern Goldstein.

Absent: Chairman; Judy Hendrixson

Review of Minutes:

In the form of a motion by Mr. Harvey; seconded by Mr. Redfield the September 28, 2015 Doylestown Township Planning Commission Regular meeting minutes were approved.

Motion carried 4 to 0.

In the form of a motion by Mr. Lowenstein; seconded by Mr. Harvey the October 26, 2015 Doylestown Township Planning Joint Planning Commission with New Britain Borough meeting minutes were approved.

Motion carried 4 to 0.

Public\Commission Comments – None

Tabor Property – Sketch Plan \ Continued Discussion

Developer; Pam Northrup explained the property is currently zoned commercial in the C3 District and applicants recently met with the Board of Supervisors where the board deferred making a decision until they received the Planning Commission's recommendation. The plan has not changed since the last meeting as a commercial use where it can be a 100,000 square foot office facility. The applicants are also proposing a text amendment adding a B16 use and a map change rezoning part of the property to the R1 District. Ms. Northrup introduced Kristen Holmes of HC Engineering who will be identifying other options the property can be zoned as and why the R1 is being requested.

Ms. Northrup reported as a response to traffic concerns, the applicants presented to the township a traffic study of daily trips for a 100,000 square foot facility at 1,313 daily trips versus the daily single family homes at 239 daily trips generated.

Ms. Holmes explained the different permitted uses that can be placed on the portion of the property under Commercial C3. There are a host of permitted uses and upon reviewing the different uses and the most relevant for the area along with an analysis of what is proposed on the by right. One option is a C1 School. The property is not large enough to fit a junior high school, high school or public school, but it is large enough to fit an elementary school of approximately 400 students. This will include associated improvements of driveways, buses and parking facilities for the employees. Another permitted use would be a nursing home under the C11 use. A 1,000 bed facilities would

fit the site as a campus type setting. Associated improvements would include parking with multiple buildings spread throughout the site that would lend approximately 100,000 square feet of multi-story buildings overall. The third option is medical or office buildings. There are two different uses with two different parking requirements. The medical office will require 75,000 square feet of space for both multi story or a campus layout with parking lot facilities. The D1 general office use is based upon the traffic generation memorandum. Approximately, a 100,000 square foot of office with the required parking can be proposed. The final option is a financial bank, veterinary office or clinic. Each have the same parking requirements as the office, so a variation of layouts can be utilized for mixed uses of the facilities. It will total approximately 100,000 square feet, similar to the traffic generation memorandum previously submitted.

The uses presented have a higher traffic generation than a residential use proposed for the zoning district change. The permitted uses for the residential in one district are different types of single family. The properties surrounding the tract to the north, south and the west are all zoned R1 and in-kind with the surrounding neighborhoods and uses.

Mr. Kelso clarified that two items requested are a map change from the C3 use to R1 for a portion of the tract. Mr. Kelso then question how many acres are included. Ms. Holmes indicated 13 acres. The second request is adding a text amendment for a B16 permitted as a conditional use in R1. Mr. Kelso then questioned without a text and map change, where are site capacity calculations completed. Ms. Holmes answered; A detail survey was not performed and based upon information available on GIS, for the single family detached based on density will permit 14 lots. The plan proposes 20 single family homes. The applicants are also proposing to maintain and preserve the existing manor home along with the view shed and open space of the property.

Mr. Kelso indicated upon the recent Planning commission site visit, a few observations were noted as the existing manor home is currently being used for offices and there would be very little rear yard and virtually no side yard under the proposed plan. Another observation was the very low density of the of the surrounding residential development. However, there are no issues with the proposed access.

Mr. Lowenstein commented if the site was changed to R1 without the text amendment it will provide 14 lots and may relieve complications with side yards if the manor home is not included on the plans. He then questioned if that approach was considered. Ms. Northrup answered; owner of the Tabor Home is having a difficult time maintaining the property and the infrastructure is deteriorating. Eventually, the property will need a public sewer and water connection to assist in generating revenue. As a result, a plan to develop a site with 14 single family homes is not workable for what is required.

Ms. Stern Goldstein questioned if the 14 homes are just in the portion to rezone. Ms. Holmes indicated yes and the overall subdivision with the Tabor services maintaining five acres of C3 with calculations are based upon the 13.7. Ms. Stern Goldstein noted another issue with the open space located on the corner where Tabor wanted to reserve the right to maintain recreation and camp uses that would be open space. Mr. Kelso added; the issue is contrary to what the options the SALDO has for the use of open space. It will be under a singular ownership instead of a HOA or Township. Ms. Holmes questioned; in terms of allowing for Tabor services on the open space, could it be deemed a portion of recreational open space. This will provide a portion of the space can be used while maintaining the rest as preserved open space. Mr. Lowenstein responded; the applicants would have to submit an application for additional change. Upon a brief discussion regarding options for the proposed site, Mr. Kelso added; it will be a text change in which he would not be comfortable with, because it will apply to all properties in the Township.

To provide a realtor perspective, Ms. Northrup explained there are many empty nesters who are currently searching for homes with smaller lots. The twenty homes proposed will be custom, beginning at 3,000 to 3,800 square feet. The manor home cannot be a financial institution because it cannot generate revenue. The buyer would need to be someone who wants to reside in a historical home and pay for high priced renovations. The current owners need something to protect the home, which is why the large open space is attached to the manor house.

Mr. Kelso stated he has a number of issues with the plan to include the increase of density for the preservation of a historic structure. Increased density was not something that was contemplated under the historic preservation provisions of the Zoning Ordinance. It's address several ways under the ordinance such as providing more density development, but not more units. It also allows for different uses for historic structures, which is a common thread through historic preservation and zoning. The typical sustainable use for an historic structure has been some commercial use, a historic structure for residential use is not always sustainable. His concern is the plan may be taking a viable property and creating a non-viable structure by converting it back to residential use. Mr. Lowenstein added; in doing so, changes to the zoning also creates distance issues from the property line. There are other ways to make a more beneficial financial deal without such modifications.

Ms. Holmes responded; as far as maintaining the manor home as an office, the subdivision line would be changed so it doesn't go between the buildings. However, setback relief will still be needed because the ordinance requires 100 foot building setback between commercial and residential use. This would sustainably alter the subdivision line into a good portion of tract. It will also add a good amount of acreage to the Tabor property, which originally they were trying to reduce.

Ms. Stern Goldstein noted many of the issues are addressed in the ordinances, such as C3 requires ten acres. If the manor house was part of the commercial, non-residential portion of the lot would be part of the ten acres normally required for a C3 lot. Ms. Holmes stated the Tabor property is considered under the C8 use, which requires five acres. Mr. Kelso added; changes such as the C8 uses makes sense for the historic zoning ordinance. This will allow for direct zoning relief. Increasing the density by 40% was not part of the intent, in particular to the adjoining properties. Mr. Kelso continued; the designs are not innovative with the homes for increasing the density by 40%.

Ms. Mason stated when the Planning Commission worked on the B15 ordinance, the key was the architectural nature of the historic structure had to be carried through the townhomes. Trying to duplicate it in a single family use will view it differently. It will bring up concerns with distracting from the originally intent. Another issue is the proceeds Tabor Services receive assist with renovating the manor home and enhance their current property. Depending upon what improvements are made, a hardship can be created because of expansion requirements. Ms. Stern Goldstein added; once you begin going into the buildings, the ADA requirements will need to be brought into full compliance. Ms. Mason advised the applicants to make sure the plan is not short in acreage once completed. Ms. Stern Goldstein continued; once lot lines are changed, there are set backs requirements for the recreation component with direct connection to the property line by 100 feet. This will create setbacks for the applicants and create hardship on the property in a way in which it's used.

Upon Mr. Lowenstein explaining the sketch plan process, Ms. Kelso stated if the requested changes are made to the ordinance, there are other historic properties where it may not work. His concern is this may raise other issues the township not anticipated with historic preservation. Mr. Colello commented he's not sure why the township should entertain the zoning change, unless the applicants can provide facts or data. Ms. Holmes responded; with the surrounding area are currently zoned R1, the proposed site will fit with the area. The commission disagreed. Mr. Kelso stated there are three properties adjoining the site with much larger lots, which is a concern. Chasing

development cycles is a difficult thing to predict. Mr. Kelso suggested Tabor Services meet with the Planning Commission to discuss options for the property. Tabor is an important part of the community on many different levels providing needed services and has an excellent reputation.

CEO of Tabor Services; John Solomon indicated company has been losing approximately two million a year for the past two years and currently spending \$100,000 per year in utilities. Other issues include badly operating water lines where public water and sewer is a necessity and failing storage tanks. It's Tabor's plan to remain on the site to maintain and grow their services to become more financially viable. One of the options is to sell a portion of the land and use proceeds towards the growth. Mr. Kelso indicated some of the options presented may hinder expansion for the Tabor services, particularly with the open space issue. Unless the issues are fully vetted, understood and agreed by everyone, there may be some risks involved.

Resident: Gary Nice stated many of the site's existing zoning options do not make sense considering the township has many nursing homes nearby and another is not needed. He is in favor of a commercial property where it will have less traffic and hardship for the existing community. He also agrees with Mr. Kelso's comments of building a community with 20 homes with less than an acre of property is not within the characteristics of the township. Mr. Nice concluded by questioning if the Tabor property is provided public water and sewer, will the adjoining communities need a connection as well and what is the time line for the zoning change. Mr. Kelso answered; public connection cannot be determined at tonight's meeting.

Ms. Northrup questioned what are the next steps for the applicants. With Tabor services having an immediate need to begin, would it be worth meeting with Tabor privately to review options. Mr. Kelso responded the matter needs to go forward to the Board of Supervisors. He recommends the commission pass their comments to the Board. Ms. Mason reported at the last Board meeting, it was indicated no other comments will be made until an application is submitted. Ms. Mason offered Tabor visit the municipal building to meet for discussions. Ms. Mason indicated she did receive a sense from the Board of their willingness to move forward until issues are vetted out.

To summarize, the commission's concerns are density, the sustainability of other historic properties currently zoned R1 and distance with the commercial boundary lines.

Ms. Northrup then questioned if the commission suggests the applicants move forward with a formal application submittal. Ms. Stern Goldstein indicated if the applicants take the feedback, the next step would be to submit a formal application. She then strongly suggested the applicants consider the feedback stated during tonight's meeting when making the application.

Town's Edge Sketch Plan – Zaveta Developers

Developer; Richardt Zaveta reported the Town's Edge sketch plan currently has approval for six homes and has not received the sales expected. In order to increase marketing, Mr. Zaveta provided several options to provide a different look while remaining within the township's character with historic flavor. One of the options is to preserve the original farm and parts of the existing home. The property is on 3.1 acres, 2.1 net acres and currently under the R4 District. Mr. Zaveta would like to interpret the E5 Use, which will provide 6 acres.

Parking will be constructed as tandem under the units and can only be blocked in by the other occupant of the residence. Two parking spaces per unit will total 5 with guest parking around the perimeter and equally ten more

parking spaces directly behind the building. There will be two garages with one outdoors still leaving over thirty feet between for navigation. There is a total of 12 spaces, but 10 spaces can be park beneath which leaves two garage spaces. The garage spaces will be open. The design inspiration came from the original farm concept and was drawn off the lineage in the main section. Open stall doors will only be installed at the bottom of the building. The thought was not to have stall doors for safety, general presence and easy navigation. Storage for each individual unit will be provided on the lower level. Gilmore Associates' Engineer; Greg Glitzer explained there is a 3 ½ to 4-foot drop at the edge of Lower State Road. The E5 Use is considered as a two family semi-detached unit. The units are considered as over and under and sharing a common party wall. It's a by-right use in the R4 District, meets all the dimensional standards and will be vetted out moving forward.

Mr. Zaveta stated each unit is approximately 1,300 square feet with stairs or an elevator going up. The first floor will have an entry and use of the existing farm as the design element for the front and sliding doors on the top. This will provide a corridor space of natural light. The back will have glass with a door off the balcony for fire safety with an egress. The corridor will be providing access from basement to the first and second floors as well as an elevator. Mr. Zaveta concluded the plans provide function, aesthetics, presentation, not cluttering the site with excessive parking while keeping in time.

Mr. Kelso questioned what was the thought with the relationship of the building to the street itself. Mr. Zaveta answered; as oppose to rear yards the living area of the house rest to the street with camouflage, which the Board disagreed with. In this case, the area was brought back to the mean front approximately 130 feet behind the turf. With this change, a not necessary to hide using a berm or trees. The concept in the architecture not to have something as an apology or second rate. Mr. Kelso questioned the grading dropping off uniformly from the road to the Goetzberger house. Mr. Zaveta responded; upon trying to step the grade with the individual homes was challenging. The new grading will provide a higher first floor, where before the first row needed be driven very deep. Currently the first floor elevation is within four feet from Lower State Road with a natural presentation. Mr. Zaveta added; the original location remains and the road entry remains consistent. From an impervious count, the zoning laws are for 91,455 and currently looking at 90,000 less.

Upon Mr. Kelso's question regarding setbacks pertaining to the existing cottage house near the road, Mr. Glitzer explained the road is considered a collector and the setback is 65 feet and currently the home is set back approximately 30 feet. Mr. Kelso agreed with how the proposed structure was positioned on the tract, but disappointed on losing the historic barns. Mr. Zaveta added he is planning repurposing the old stone with the proposed structure.

Mr. Kelso commented the front elevation shows the projection on the left and a setback on the right. Mr. Zaveta responded; there is a slight set back with a projection forward. Turning the gable allows to hold pitches while still sitting with the maximum confines of the structure.

Ms. Stern Goldstein questioned why the B5 use is being utilized and not the B6 multi-family use. Mr. Glitzer explained the use as an over-under, which B5 begins and attaches to another common wall. Each unit has separate entrances not shown under the B6 use. Mr. Zaveta added; the 2 family attaches to other common walls. Mr. Kelso suggested to include a narrative with the application for clarification. Mr. Glitzer referenced the R4 District flexibility to work within the ordinance and not go outside the provision 175.58(A).2. Ms. Stern Goldstein clarified the B6 Use is basically a duplex over-under attached to the others and under own blanketed group. Mr. Glitzer agreed. She then requested clarification if the plans show six semi-detached units to receive 12 units. Mr. Glitzer agreed. Ms. Stern Goldstein agreed a narrative will need to be included with the plans to clarify B5 use. Mr. Kelso suggested to

have Township Solicitor; Jeffrey P. Garton review the zoning issue as well so there is agreement prior to submitting a plan.

Upon a brief discussion regarding the definition of a B6 use, Mr. Zaveta noted the site will have existing vegetation as part of the landscaping, natural field stone will be dug into the hillside providing access down to the restored springhouse. Ms. Stern Goldstein questioned if storm water issues will be addressed. Mr. Glitzer answered; the storm water will be augmented with something underneath the parking area. The current plan has more room to work with stormwater than the previous plan submitted.

Mr. Kelso questioned if ownership will be in fee for individual units and property owner's association. Mr. Zaveta indicated yes. Mr. Kelso then suggested a zoning memo of understanding I be created and provided to the township staff. Mr. Zaveta agreed and will provide that.

Butler Avenue Corridor – Steve Barth

Director of Economic Development for New Britain Borough; Steve Barth addressed the commission as part of the Joint Planning Commission, consisting of Bucks County, New Britain Borough, Doylestown Township and Delaware Valley University. Mr. Barth received a \$100,000 Delaware Valley Regional Economic and Development grant to study Butler Avenue corridor, which is being administered by Chief Clerk of the Bucks County Planning Commission; Lynn Bush. The study will cover Bristol Road through New Britain Road.

As part of the study, New Britain requested to change and rebrand the Borough to create a new identity from just a pass through community. To accomplish this goal, three different regions along Butler Avenue were identified. The region closest to Doylestown is proposed to be named University Village and is located between Shady Retreat and New Britain Roads. The brand idea for the area is to create a main street, college town in New Britain Borough and Doylestown Township with mixed use retail stores and pub style restaurants.

Options for changes are to relocate the existing Del Val railroad station to along Butler Avenue into a Transit oriented development complex with housing on the second floor. Mr. Barth then requested the commission's guidance on how to proceed with the plans as they pertain to the University property at the intersection of Shady Retreat Road and Butler Ave. The plans are also to assist the University on generating funds by selling off assets, such as land in Doylestown Township and redirecting for a better purpose. Another proposed change is to have sidewalks with street lamps with banners along Butler Avenue. Mr. Barth then provided the commission with sketch plans designed by Gilmore Associates of gateway and access roads proposed as part of the plan. Per Delaware Valley University President; Joseph S. Brosnan suggestion, the plans also include roundabouts at Shady Retreat and New Britain Roads. Some of the developments will be near the Knoll property where a university village is proposed to be designed. Mr. Kelso questioned what are the university's plan for the parcel. Mr. Barth answered; there is no intended use for the property. Mr. Kelso then questioned the status of the drainage through the middle of the 3-acre property and the historic Feldstein home. Mr. Barth answered; the Feldstein home is currently being occupied by Dr. Feldstein and no plans are scheduled. Mr. Kelso noted the plans show the buildings to be removed and questioned and if housing is still proposed to be developed. Mr. Barth indicated it will be up to the commission to provide guidance on how to move forward. Mr. Kelso responded; the site is owned by the University and we will be looking to them for the long term use of the property. Mr. Barth indicated the University's development plans are only concerning the campus itself and never intended to use the seven acres for development. Upon Mr. Lowenstein

question on whom the plan is for, Mr. Barth requested the commission's recommendation on adopting an ordinance that will allow a University Village be created.

Mr. Kelso commented on the sketch presented is similar to a 1950s strip mall and many of the proposed plans don't make sense for the environmental restrictions existing on the site. One of the items is removing the Delaware Valley University's train station is a bad idea. Parking is very important for train stations and is utilized by many employees in the surrounding area. Mr. Barth indicated as part of his study, 99.9% of parking at the station is used by the students and does not function as a community train station. Mr. Kelso disagreed and expressed concerned Mr. Barth's plan moved the station further from major places of employment. Mr. Barth commented the Delaware Valley University does not function as a commuter station, such as the New Britain Station. Ms. Stern Goldstein commented how when they utilized the station, they witnessed many other commuters on many occasions. Mr. Kelso questioned what are the University's thoughts on keeping the train station. Mr. Barth answered; Dr. Brosnan indicated the students do not use the station. Upon a discussion regarding the status of the University's train station and demographics, Mr. Barth reported because there are no restrictions on off campus student housing, it would be beneficial to develop additional graduate housing in place of the station.

Ms. Mason requested clarification by questioning changing the ordinance on the Knoll property in New Britain Borough, students of DVU cannot rent apartments. Mr. Barth responded; the Borough believes the statement is true. Ms. Stern Goldstein questioned if the Borough believes they can have discriminated against students. Mr. Barth indicated he believes the answer is yes and as a planner, he recommended the restriction is changed. Mr. Lowenstein commented the restriction does not make sense. Mr. Barth then explained, the restriction may be based upon fear of a situation becoming out of control, such as with the move "National Lampoon's Animal House".

Mr. Kelso commented the proposed plan is better discussed at a Joint Planning Commission meeting to receive ideas from New Britain Borough. Mr. Kelso stated there is no real planning currently, but a just a general discussion. He recommends Mr. Barth begin a formal planning process, review the site restrictions and options. The site needs to be viewed closely to find it's potential, so a sketch plan can be submitted for the commission to view. Mr. Lowenstein commented even if the zoning is changed, the property itself has restrictions. He then suggested to find vendors that will succeed financially in the area.

Ms. Stern Goldstein suggested to verify where DVU will have their entrance and determine if it's going to be gateway or entrance to the university. An entrance will not work internally with their circulation. She agrees the limitations of the site will first need to be considered to determine what can be developed. Mr. Barth responded; 1/3 to 1/4 of wetlands will be lost and there are somethings that cannot be developed. Ms. Stern Goldstein added; setback will need to be applied and programs viewed to see how it relates to housing. A discussion with the university will also be needed to find out what their plans are for the parcel and how it will be intergraded into the campus.

Mr. Lowenstein questioned if the University has shared their Master plan. Mr. Barth answered; DVU has been contemplating different scenarios, but none have been approved by the Board of Trustees.

Mr. Barth indicated per the commission's recommendation, the next steps are to develop a more concrete plan and schedule a second meeting to provide clarity of the plan. Mr. Lowenstein added; the plan should have a connection with Delaware Valley University. DVU owns the property and the plan should reflect some function with them. Mr. Barth agreed and indicated the plan is to unify the entire complex.

Mr. Kelso noted two obstacles as multiple problems. The ideal would be to develop the entire area uniformly and in a manner that makes sense. The other is there are two municipalities involved where developers may be cautious. Mr. Lowenstein added; it's very difficult for the commission to provide recommendations without knowing the university's plans.

90 Day Clock

The next meeting of the Doylestown Township Planning Commission is Wednesday, December 16, 2015. Mr. Kelso stated he may not be present for the next meeting.

Ms. Mason reported 651 Shady Retreat Preliminary Subdivision Development plans is slated for the December meeting.

Adjournment:

With no further business, the November 23, 2015 Doylestown Township Planning Commission Regular meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m.