

**Meeting Minutes from the
DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
October 1, 2020**

The Doylestown Township Planning Commission Meeting was held at 5:00 p.m., Thursday, October 1, 2020 at 425 Wells Road, Doylestown, PA 18901. Members of the Doylestown Township Planning Commission in attendance included Chairperson: Judy Hendrixson, Vice Chairman; Gregory Reppa with members; Tom Kelso, Ted Feldstein and Jill Macauley. Others in attendance included, Board of Liaisons: Jennifer Herring & Nancy Santacecilia, Township Planning Consultant; Judy Stern Goldstein, Code Enforcement Director; Sinclair Salisbury and Township Manager; Stephanie Mason.

Ms. Hendrixson welcomed new Planning Commission member Jill Macauley, everyone went around the table introducing themselves.

Review of Minutes:

On motion of Mr. Kelso; seconded by Mr. Reppa the August 24, 2020 Doylestown Township Planning Commission meeting minutes were unanimously approved. With a change in the spelling of Ms. Santacecilia's name.

Public Comments:

None

Subdivision Land Development (SALDO) – Continued Discussion

Review of memo from Ms. Goldstein dated 9/24/20 Accessory Dwelling Units (see attached).

The Planning Commission reviewed the memo prepared by Planning Consultant Ms. Goldstein looking at the two separate uses, the accessory dwelling unit, formerly known as the In-Law Suite, not for rent or for profit. Option 2 has the wording that would allow for these types of units to become income or rental producing for the property owner.

The Planning Commission focused on the first and also discussed the accessory family apartment, which is a permitted use in the A1 Uses for agricultural purposes, such as large farms. There was a discussion and concern about having home health aide or domestic servants living in such a facility as well on the property.

Mr. Kelso suggested changing the definition for a caretaker in addition to a tenant farmer enabling people to age in place.

Ms. Herring agreed that extending the definition for workers and allowing people with caretakers was beneficial.

Ms. Santacecilia indicated that looking at things through a larger lens is important.

Mr. Salisbury indicated that a change in name from the In-Law Suite that everyone is used to would also require a deed restriction to run with the property and initial approval. This will be very helpful.

There was some discussion about permitting the uses and requiring them to come back to the Zoning Hearing Board if things change.

There was also come discussion about the Accessory Family Apartment going to the Zoning Hearing Board with deed restriction limitations versus the tenant situation. We're no longer experiencing large farms in the Township. It was indicated that enforcement could become an issue.

Mr. Reppa indicated that having a home health aide with an in-home apartment would be ok.

Ms. Herring questioned if a caretaker having access to a dwelling would have to go to the Zoning Hearing Board? She inquired if it could be treated similar to a no impact home base business that would not have to go the Zoning Hearing Board. Home based businesses are typically only for the inhabitants, otherwise they would need to go to the Zoning Hearing Board Ms. Goldstein explained.

Mr. Reppa indicated including the home health care worker in line with the old In-Law Suite is important.

There was consensus to include it in the ordinance to have the caretaker in the home or accessory dwelling.

There was discussion regarding the 25% limitation. Consensus was that overall it seems reasonable, if the home is small Ms. Goldstein highlighted that variances would need to be sought from the Zoning Hearing Board. Consensus was to keep it at 25%.

Ms. Goldstein referenced Mr. Kelso's suggestion on the example of a prefab unit going on the site versus converting an existing structure.

Mr. Kelso commented that single family homes could build a detached garage and then come into the Zoning Hearing Board. But the design makes sense be allow it to fit better on the site if need be, of course, going to the Zoning Hearing Board. It can look bad if it is not well constructed and in concert. It was noted that connect these buildings via a walkway.

Mr. Reppa inquired about the requirements for the Bucks County Health Department. It was indicated that the BCHD looks at the number of bedrooms and whether or not the OLDS can handle the additional rooms.

Ms. Goldstein indicated that the Board of Supervisors under the MPC always has the ability to look at the Zoning Hearing Board applications prior to them going to the Zoning Hearing Board.

There was some discussion among the Planning Commission on whether or not the applications should continue to go to the Zoning Hearing Board, or if there should be some hybrid created. After discussion it was the consensus of all to continue to utilize the Zoning Hearing Board for the specials exceptions/variances for the accessory dwelling units. It appears that the system is working well.

The Planning Commission discussed the wording for a proposed H-12 Accessory Rental Unit that was prepared for review.

This creates a separate use. There was some concern about seeing it added in the R1 Zoning District.

Ms. Santacecilia questioned if it would have an impact on the school district.

Ms. Macauley questioned if there were any data to impact rentals and single family properties. What are the pros and cons?

Ms. Goldstein indicated that demographic data is typically on owner/occupied, in cities you see more of the rental, in the first ring suburbs you begin to see a difference and as you get out further it becomes all owner occupied as the highest percentage. She indicated that this was more of a policy issue regarding affordability and a way to separate the issues versus zoning.

Mr. Kelso commented on the various zoning districts and having it not be applicable in all the districts. However, consideration in higher density districts may be beneficial.

Ms. Santacecilia questioned infrastructure available and the impact again on schools.

Ms. Herring questioned home conversions as options, we discussed that in terms of being applied to historical structure.

Ms. Macauley indicated that she has friends, who cohabitated as younger people cannot always afford to buy homes, so they live together as a family in a home.

Ms. Goldstein indicated that the R2b and R4 Zoning Districts allow for multifamily dwellings.

It was the consensus of the Planning Commission that there was no rush to further discuss the H-12 at this time.

As for the Accessory Dwelling Unit it was the consensus of the Planning Commission to send it to Jeff Garton, Township Solicitor to prepare a draft ordinance.

October 16, 2020 Round Table Discussions – 611 Corridor

The Planning Commission discussed hosting a round table discussion regarding concerns for possible future development along the 611 Corridor and best practices that the Township should begin to look at now.

It was the consensus that over the next several months to hold a series of small round table discussions with three to four speakers sharing their ideas on trends in the area such as medical/biotech, non-commercial development and what others are doing?

It was suggested to have Evan Stone, Executive Director of the Bucks County Planning Commission attend these meetings.

It was suggested that for the first meeting we invite Rick Lyons, Mike Meister and Bruce Goodman to talk about projects that they are doing in our community or elsewhere and what trends are occurring.

At a future meetings we can invite Michael Markman from BET Investments and Larry Burns from Horsham Township to speak.

At some point it was suggested in having Jim Brexler, President and CEO of Doylestown Health and perhaps Ken Snyder former Township Supervisor and currently a member of the Doylestown Health Advisory Board along with Dr. Block from the Biotech Center to speak on trends in these areas would be very beneficial.

Ms. Mason will reach out to Mr. Lyons, Mr. Meister & Mr. Goodman and invite them to attend the October 26th meeting.

In attrition there will be a sketch plan and a landscape plan modification to review.

Adjournment:

Being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:51PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie J. Mason
Township Manager