

## DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting – Held via zoom

April 26, 2021

### Meeting Minutes

The Doylestown Township Planning Commission Regular Meeting was held at 7:00 pm on Monday, April 26, 2021. This meeting was held via Zoom. Members of the Doylestown Township Planning Commission in attendance included **Judy Hendrixson, Chairman; Gregory Reppa, Vice Chairperson; members Tom Kelso and Jill Macauley. Others in attendance included Judy Stern Goldstein, Planning Consultant, Stephanie Mason, Township Manager, Sinclair Salisbury, Director of Code Enforcement, Sean Torpey, Township Engineer, Jen Herring Board of Supervisors Liaison and Nancy Santacecilia, Board of Supervisors Liaison.**

**Absent: Ted Feldstein**

The meeting officially began at 7:05 pm.

#### Review of Minutes

On motion of Mr. Reppa and seconded by Ms. Macauley, the March 22, 2021 minutes were unanimously approved.

#### Public/Commission Comments/Presentations

No comment.

#### Plans Scheduled for Discussion

##### **60 Meetinghouse Road**

Ben Goldthorpe, developer of 60 Meetinghouse Road, and Rob Cunningham, design engineer, were present at the meeting and expressed that they are willing to comply with all review comments in the consultants' letters and are hoping to ask the planning commission for their recommendation for preliminary approval.

About request #3 in their waiver request letter, Mr. Kelso expressed that he preferred no blanket waivers be granted and requested that any waivers be for specific lots. Mr. Goldthorpe clarified that they were requesting a blanket waiver for all lots, but that he would modify it to be more specific.

Mr. Reppa asked for an explanation of what is happening with the Meetinghouse Road taper.

Mr. Goldthorpe shared the plan to show that there would be a 175-foot-long taper along the roadway. He expressed that Meetinghouse would not be altered much except for a water line in the street that requires some restoration work. Meetinghouse will not look much different other than taper.

Mr. Reppa asked how the taper intersects with the out parcel there. Mr. Goldthorpe explained that it would be 75 feet away from the driveway and will not have much impact.

Mr. Reppa then brought up the bike path on the plan and asked where it goes. Mr. Goldthorpe said that it would stop where it is for grading purposes, and that if they were to try and extend the trail to the property line it would require an easement from the neighbor. He felt it was better to leave it as is, and possibly connect in the future. Mr. Reppa thought it would be better to seek the easement and make that transition now. Mr. Goldthorpe said this was discussed with the bike and hike committee and they found it acceptable. Mr. Kelso agreed.

Ms. Hendrixson requested that Mr. Goldthorpe review what is happening for the open space area.

Mr. Goldthorpe shared the landscape plan and said that a few trees would be planted but that it would mostly be lawn or turf area maintained by the Homeowner's Association.

Ms. Hendrixson then asked if the steep area by the basin had been resolved. Mr. Goldthorpe explained that the contours had been adjusted and that they softened the radiuses for the trail. They also pulled back the grading from the property line.

Ms. Hendrixson then noted that they changed the lot line for lot 10. Mr. Goldthorpe confirmed that they did this to avoid encumbrances.

Mr. Reppa then asked about the drainage issues off Maple Leaf. Mr. Goldthorpe said that the existing inlet would be replaced, and the upsized pipe system will take drainage into the basin. He clarified that this would accommodate additional stormwater at the site.

Ms. Goldstein brought up the corner of lot 9 and the out parcel and suggested that this was an area of concern, with grading and trees on the neighbor's property. Mr. Goldthorpe said he would correct it.

Mr. Goldthorpe also explained that the power for the site would be underground and no poles would be needed within the development.

Mr. Reppa asked Mr. Goldthorpe to show the buffering between individual properties and suggested that there were gaps in the screening on lot 2, which is the closest lot to an existing home.

Ms. Goldstein clarified the types of trees and shrubs that are noted on the plan. Mr. Cunningham expressed that they would provide a mix of deciduous, flowering, and evergreen trees to provide a buffer. They are using the replacement tree requirement to fill these spaces. The goal was to offer variety and interest in this way.

Mr. Reppa suggested that lots 2 and 5 could use additional screening. Ms. Goldstein clarified that the plantings are up to the landscape architect and that these types of trees are requested but not required.

Mr. Goldthorpe agreed that this could be talked about as conditions of approval. He further suggested that they add an additional 5 evergreens: some on lot 5 and the remainder behind lot 2.

Mark Roth of 43 Hickory Lane suggested that there is not much buffer between lot 6 and 7, and that some of the existing trees there may need to come down.

Mr. Goldthorpe said that they could adjust the plan in the field as needed. Ms. Goldstein suggested a site meeting prior to planting, and Mr. Goldthorpe agreed.

David Snyder of 46 Hickory Lane clarified that some of the existing trees in this area have had their limbs cut about 8 feet up, so there is a direct line of site through the trees. He asked for additional trees that were off set and staggered to avoid a visual from the new development to Hickory Lane. Ms. Hendrixson suggested that the developer add lower story plantings.

Mr. Snyder (46 Hickory Lane) requested some type of photoshopped image from those houses to get a visual as it is hard to understand from the plan. He also suggested that an agreed upon plan would be better rather than making changes in the field, as individual properties could be impacted and request changes.

Ms. Hendrixson agreed that this was a good suggestion and added that some more shrubs over trees would be helpful to fill those gaps.

Mr. Goldthorpe then suggested that the new homeowners will likely add some additional landscaping and to keep that in mind. Mr. Snyder expressed concern that he could not rely on this.

Mr. Cunningham offered that the intent of the plan is to meet ordinance requirements. Ms. Goldstein commented that the plan meets the tree and stormwater requirements, and that the replacement tree calculation is being met. She further stated that no buffer is required per the ordinance because the property is zoned R1 and abuts R1 properties.

Mr. Cunningham then suggested that it may be a better approach to solve these problems after grading has been completed, and that field adjusting could be beneficial. Mr. Snyder (46 Hickory Lane) offered an alternative solution of providing up to 15 shrubs and/or trees that would be used at discretion.

Mr. Goldthorpe clarified that they have agreed to add 5 trees and 12 shrubs to the plan.

Mr. Snyder (46 Hickory Lane) again requested that the plan be solidified because the reality is that more could be needed. He further expressed that this was a sticking point among neighbors.

Mr. Kelso interjected that they would have that opportunity and clarified that the developer is asking to move forward as a preliminary plan to go to the Board of Supervisors. The BOS would then approve it and it would come back to the Planning Commission as a final plan. This could be a condition of preliminary plan approval.

Ms. Hendrixson agreed that it makes sense to give a certain allowance behind lot 2 and then specified that lot 6 and 7 should have additional plantings, but that it is hard to quantify without a site visit. Mr. Reppa agreed that a site visit could resolve some of these issues.

Ms. Goldstein wished to clarify to the residents that what will happen in the field will not be a total screen, and that no buffer is required by ordinance. These are replacement and supplemental tree plantings intended as to soften the view of the development.

Mr. Reppa then asked the developer to talk about the changes to street lighting. Mr. Goldthorpe said that they agreed to have one streetlight that is typical of what is used in the township, with a wooden post and traditional fixture with a full cut-off LED. Ms. Hendrixson asked him to then clarify if there would be lighting at the end of driveways. Mr. Goldthorpe said this was not included in the plan.

Susan Albert of 77 Meetinghouse Rd. requested an explanation of the Meetinghouse Road taper. Mr. Goldthorpe explained that the taper is proposed where there is a dead end or embankment. The embankment will be removed, and the area will be filled with pavement to offer a smoother transition.

Mr. Kelso then asked if the developer is intending to meet all ordinance requirements regarding basements. Mr. Goldthorpe said this has not yet been looked at in detail, but they plan to provide sump pumps in home with basements. Mr. Cunningham offered that the ordinance requires a mechanical way to drain the foundation. Mr. Kelso said this should be looked at in more detail.

Mr. Snyder (46 Hickory Lane) brought up a previous comment made by Mr. Kelso regarding the open space and that it was not being utilized properly. He asked if there were any changes to that, and asked what is usually done in these situations, and how much is passive open space.

Mr. Goldthorpe clarified that there is roughly three and half acres of space, and said they did multiple sketch plans to best utilize the open space. As a result, 15 to 20 feet of open space was derived from a desire to create a buffer between these homes and existing homes. This was not required by code but was more of a design process to see what would best fit for the neighborhood.

Mr. Kelso expressed concern over the HOA gaining access to the open space, particularly at lot 4. Mr. Goldthorpe said there would be access from Maple Leaf to maintain both the basin and the open space. Mr. Cunningham added that there would be notations allowing the HOA to access the open space from anyone's lot.

Ms. Hendrixson explained that the open space does not connect to anything else, so it did not make sense to make it public open space for the Township. Ms. Goldstein added that this would likely not have been accepted by the Township as dedicated open space.

Ms. Hendrixson called for a motion to move the plan forward. Mr. Kelso made a motion to recommend the plan to the Board of Supervisors for preliminary plan approval with the following conditions: 1) that the waiver request be for specific lots, 2) that the trail be moved further away from the out parcel toward lots 9 and 10 at the rear corners, and 3) that the applicant agree to work with the Township to provide 5 additional trees and 12 additional shrubs that will be on the plan and worked out with the Township consultants. Ms. Goldstein added that the developer also agrees to comply with the consultants' letters.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Reppa and carried 4-0.

### **New Items for Review**

#### Township 537 Plan – Castle Valley Diversion Pump Station

Ms. Mason introduced Steve Hartman from Carroll Engineering, appearing on behalf of Bucks County Water & Sewer Authority.

Mr. Hartman explained that the existing pump station that takes flows from Kings Plaza and pumps up to the Green Street treatment plant has been operational since the mid-90s and has had approval from DEP to be upgraded since 1999. DEP now wants a special study because the capacity has changed. They cannot simply upgrade but must add a booster station that will take flows from a force main to booster pumps and will increase the capacity of the diversion station. The booster station would be on an

easement on Sauerman Park property, which is equidistant to Castle Valley and Green Street. It would intercept the existing forced main in this area. It would include a 10x10 vault, two pipes below grade, an above ground control panel, a transformer for electric power, and a driveway for service personnel. He added that the above ground area can be screened with shrubs.

Ms. Hendrixson said they have not looked at the impact on the park from a structural standpoint.

Mr. Hartman said there are some minor impervious calculations, but they are not at a point yet to go to Zoning Hearing Board.

Ms. Mason said the area would be like those of the water authority and added that there would be little impact to the park. The easement is out toward the road.

Mr. Kelso said that it is typical for the Township to grant a waiver from subdivision and land development and suggested that the applicant request the waiver now.

Mr. Hartman then requested the waiver of land development. Ms. Goldstein added that they should still comply with all zoning requirements, which does not look to be a problem. Mr. Kelso clarified that they would still submit a plan to the Township, but that this would shorten the process.

Mr. Kelso then asked if Toll Brothers could move ahead with development without this booster pump being operational. Mr. Hartman replied that they have gotten a verbal agreement from DEP that once the study is moving forward and approved by DEP, they would allow a pump and haul where the development could be built and could be handled.

Mr. Kelso asked if it would be difficult working with DEP if a new subdivision comes in that is not included in the schedule now. Mr. Hartman explained that he expects that everything will have to go through a full planning module until resolved. He added that BCWSA bought the Neshaminy Manor Complex, which is putting out more than it is supposed to and even more during wet weather events. The authority will actively start replacing sewer in that complex and create new capacity in the interceptor.

Mr. Kelso explained that the county is preparing a request for innovation proposals before it can be put out to the public. He added that it is good that they want to fix this area.

Mr. Hartman agreed that coordination would be needed and said that he will mention the redevelopment in this area to make sure of appropriate placement during clean up.

Mr. Kelso asked if there is a connection management plan right now with DEP at Castle Valley. Mr. Hartman said there is a corrective action plan for this service area.

Ms. Hendrixson asked Mr. Hartman what he was asking for from the Planning Commission at this time. Mr. Hartman explained that the DEP wants reviews from Bucks County and Township Planning Commissions, as well as the Health Department. He added that what he has seen in the past is a memo from the Township Planning Commission in support of the recommendations of the study.

Mr. Kelso made a motion that the Planning Commission authorize staff to prepare a letter to the Board of Supervisors and DEP stating that it supports the special study and its conclusions for the added booster pump for the Castle Valley interceptor, and that they appreciate BCWSA working with the Township in this area.

He then made a separate motion that the Supervisors consider a waiver of land development for the proposed booster pump station at Sauerman.

Ms. Hendrixson suggested that on special studies sometimes the DEP requests the Planning Commission to sign off and added that the Township Manager would sign off on their behalf.

Mr. Reppa seconded both motions. Motions 1 and 2 carried 4-0.

Mr. Salisbury asked Mr. Hartman if the booster station required a backup generator. Mr. Hartman replied that they are not included in the plan at this time, but that they would have 24-hour emergency services that would bring out a generator if power were lost. Mr. Salisbury suggested that a generator be added due to need. Mr. Hartman added that a regular exercise cycle would cause additional noise and may be a poor visual.

#### **Sketch Plans Scheduled for Discussion**

None.

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kaitlyn Finley, Township Code Secretary.