

DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Monday, August 22, 2022 at 7 PM

Community Meeting Room, 425 Wells Road

Meeting Minutes

The Doylestown Township Planning Commission Regular Meeting was held at 7:00 pm on Monday, August 22, 2022. Members of the Doylestown Township Planning Commission in attendance included Judy Hendrixson, Chairman; members Tom Kelso, Ted Feldstein, Jill Macauley, and Michael Kracht. Others in attendance included Stephanie Mason, Township Manager; Judy Stern Goldstein, Township Planner, Jennifer Herring, Board of Supervisors Liaison, and Sinclair Salisbury, Director of Code Enforcement.

The meeting officially began at **7:01 pm**.

Ms. Hendrixson introduced the newest member of the Planning Commission, Michael Kracht, as well as Robert Repko, who will be joining in January.

Review of Minutes

On motion of Mr. Kelso and seconded by Mr. Feldstein, the July 25, 2022 minutes were unanimously approved.

Public/Commission Comments

None.

Plans Scheduled for Discussion

Terrain at Delaware Valley University – Courtesy Review

Mike Gladnick, engineer for Terrain, and Mr. Dave Ziel, Chief Development Officer Urban Outfitters were present to provide an update to the plans for Terrain at DelVal University. They are currently in the bid phase of the project and are anticipating a groundbreaking on September 12th, with the intention of opening end of April or early May and are already taking reservations for events. There have also been updates made to the strategic alliance agreement between DelVal and Terrain, and all parties are very excited about the partnership. They have also included a “freight farm” piece, which is a type of micro farming. This piece also allows for any excess to be taken to foodbanks in the surrounding community.

Mr. Gladnick walked through the Terrain site plan and pointed out updates to the plan. This included raising the two upper bays of the parking lot to allow for stormwater infiltration underneath. There has also been additional real estate negotiated in the agreement with DelVal for ancillary off-site event parking if needed. In addition, bike racks have been moved closer to the entrance of the building rather than by the path. Water service into the property has also been upgraded in order to sprinkler the new structures.

Ms. Mason told the group that Terrain has received final Land Development Plan along with Development and Escrow Agreement approval from the Board of Supervisors.

The Planning Commission expressed positive thoughts regarding the project and the alliance agreement and are very excited about the project starting.

EV Charging Stations Ordinance Amendments

Ms. Hendrixson opened the discussion regarding the amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and asked for comments from the Planning Commission.

Ms. Goldstein provided an overview of the amendments and how they arrived at the changes. Furthermore, she added that there is a lot of debate over whether to make requirements or recommendations regarding EV charging.

Ms. Macauley noted that the City of Philadelphia Planning and Zoning requires 20 EV charging spaces in certain residential uses. She added that the city recommended looking at the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission as they are studying this right now.

Ms. Goldstein added that they require 20 spaces for 300 or more units, and she is aware of the study. She noted that we do not want the ordinance to present a hardship where applicants will be required to go before the Zoning Hearing Board.

Ms. Hendrixson expressed a tendency to want the ordinance to be vaguer, as this topic will be market driven over the next 5 to 10 years. She raised the question of whether to require this of builders in townhouse communities.

Ms. Goldstein offered an example of such a community in Montgomery Township where they are providing a number of different parking options, regardless of the requirements.

Ms. Macauley asked if the value of EV charging to the community would encourage the PC to want to make it more convenient. Should a threshold be added for a development of a certain size?

Mr. Salisbury added that since the Township has signed off on Ready for 100, what are the implications of following that?

Ms. Goldstein replied that it should be encouraged and regulated.

Ms. Mason added that as electric vehicles become more available, this will happen organically.

Ms. Macauley asked if we should be proactively requiring the infrastructure from developers.

Mr. Feldstein asked if the Township can legally require this.

Ms. Mason said that she is not aware of any challenge yet from a legal standpoint.

Mr. Salisbury clarified that they would not be required from the building code standpoint but would be from zoning or SALDO.

Ms. Macauley asked for clarification as to whether the risk of adding this to the zoning ordinance is that it may need to be amended frequently and may become an obstruction.

Ms. Mason added that the ordinance would always refer to "current code" or include "as amended" wording so it is always up to date.

Mr. Salisbury suggested that the ordinance refer to alternative fuel rather than specifically EV charging.

Ms. Goldstein responded that alternative methods could have different requirements.

Ms. Hendrixson suggested adopting parts of the amended ordinance and holding off on requiring a threshold for developers.

Mr. Kracht asked whether or not it belongs in zoning and suggested maybe it be part of SALDO.

Ms. Goldstein replied that it belongs in zoning because we're starting to see change of use or going from one use to something else.

Ms. Hendrixson added that as some shopping centers are getting redone, they are becoming more mixed use, so this falls under Land Development.

Ms. Mason noted that this is different from a tenant fit out, we're talking more about a total overhaul of a shopping center.

Ms. Goldstein suggested including everything except paragraph 6 in zoning, and instead putting that into SALDO, since it deals with adding a new parking lot.

Mr. Kelso added that it might be better to modify the current ordinance, and that there is not much substance to it under zoning.

Ms. Hendrixson suggested it be added with the parking requirements as this might be easier to follow rather than as a standalone ordinance. As far as including a threshold, that will have to vary. It may be best to come back to that after we get more direction from how others are handling this.

Mr. Salisbury suggested the ordinance reference compliance with PA UCC requirements as amended. PA UCC also states that the first EV station has to be handicapped accessible.

Mr. Kelso believed that many institutions and business owners will take care of this on their own. If it's a requirement under SALDO then it becomes more of a discussion rather than a fixed regulation.

Ms. Hendrixson closed the discussion saying that it could be addressed as part of the comprehensive plan at the next PC meeting.

Trash Hauling in the Township

Ms. Hendrixson opened the discussion regarding the question of a single trash hauler in the Township.

Ms. Mason explained that a letter was received from Mr. Richardson, a resident, outlining several issues with private trash hauling. She said the EAC has discussed this as well.

There was a discussion over the pros and cons of single trash haulers compared to private contracting. While both have benefits, it was recommended that something needs to change with the way trash hauling is handled in the Township, as it is very inefficient. It was further discussed that maybe there be tiered levels depending on the amount of trash a household generates.

Ms. Mason added that the Township has never had municipal trash hauling, it has always been private subscription between companies and the property owner. This has been a contentious issue over the years. Each situation offers its own benefits and problems.

Mr. Kelso asked why this issue is being discussed at Planning Commission.

Ms. Mason replied that the Planning Commission always looks at the Township as a whole and it can fall under the comprehensive plan on how it's addressed from a planning standpoint.

Mr. Salisbury suggested the issue also be looked at from a quality-of-life aspect, citing noise, destruction of roads, and chaos that can arise from daily trash pick-up. He added that if there is one contract between the Township and a trash hauler, then the residents would still go through the company, not the Township, with any issues that may arise.

Ms. Mason added that it would be up to the Township to bid it out, getting away from competition among individual haulers.

Ms. Goldstein offered that there are implications with Ready for 100 as well. She also noted that some residents may wish to opt out because they don't currently have a trash hauler.

Mr. Repko suggested that an "opt out" would put a greater burden on everyone else, as the contract with the Township would be based on number of households.

Ms. Herring added that a private billing model would differ from one where the service is paid through taxes. She also brought up an option of buying bags from the municipality and paying that way.

Mr. Kracht offered that Perkasio has done this for years and has become a model for recycling.

Ms. Macauley suggested showing some examples to residents, as well as some insight as to how this relates to Ready for 100.

Items Scheduled for Discussion

None.

Sketch Plans Scheduled for Discussion

None.

Ms. Macauley suggested revisiting Ready for 100 and what implications it has for decision making.

Ms. Goldstein added that this will be part of the Comp Plan discussion.

Ms. Herring noted that the EAC received the DEP grant discussed at the last meeting. They will be working with college students to do an energy inventory and create a policy.

Adjournment

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kaitlyn Finley
Office Manager, Code Enforcement