

DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Monday, October 23, 2023 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, October 23, 2023. Members of the Doylestown Township Planning Commission in attendance included Tom Kelso, Chairman; Judy Hendrixson, Vice Chairman; members Jill Macauley and Robert Repko. Others in attendance included Stephanie Mason, Township Manager; Judy Stern Goldstein, Gilmore & Associates, and Jennifer Herring, Board of Supervisors Liaison.

Not present at the meeting was member Michael Kracht.

The meeting officially began at **7:02 pm**.

Public Comment

N/A

Review of Minutes

On motion of Ms. Hendrixson and seconded by Ms. Macauley, the August 28, 2023 minutes were unanimously approved as prepared.

Old Business

N/A

New Business

Doylestown Township ACT 537 Plan – Update

Steve Hartman, the engineer for Bucks County Water & Sewer Authority provided an overview of the plan update, identifying areas of the Township that would most benefit from sewers.

Mr. Kelso noted that the Planning Commission should support the plan and the need for sewage facilities to improve the area. He added that some areas listed as ultimate service areas should be identified as areas subject to future analysis.

Mr. Hartman agreed that they could make a fourth category to call these areas out as “no intention” unless something changes in the future.

Ms. Macauley asked how the three areas of need were selected.

Ms. Mason responded that these are the areas where the DEP has directed the Township, due to failing systems on individual lots, some of which have already pulled sewer lines up to that area. The area has been identified as needing a global approach. The goal of the Township would be to treat this area similarly to the Pebble Ridge/Wood Ridge area, aiming to keep costs down as much as possible.

Mr. Kelso made a motion that the Planning Commission recommend support of the plan to the Board of Supervisors, identifying the Route 611 corridor as a priority, and that areas identified as “ultimate” be changed to future consideration if the need is present. Ms. Hendrixson seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Doylestown Township Proposed Ordinance Amendments Related to Limited Industrial (LI) District

Kelly McGowan, counsel for the applicant, provided an overview of the text amendment, which would add an affordable housing use to the LI District, and additionally a sub-use for senior affordable apartments.

There was a discussion of the terminology used and the redundancy of “affordability.” In addition, there was a discussion of the difference between the proposed use and sub-use.

Ms. McGowan noted that the dimensional requirements apply to the development itself, and then you can add sub-uses as part of that development. She clarified that the B16 use refers to the development, whereas B16a is the senior affordable sub-use.

There was then a discussion regarding access in regard to access from the back as opposed to the front.

Mr. Kelso brought up the issue of a buffer not being required between the development and the neighboring sewage treatment plant.

Ms. McGowan noted that this an amendment to the zoning ordinance and does not address the requirements of Subdivision and Land Development.

Mr. Kelso then asked about the deed restriction for the development.

Ms. McGowan responded that it is a simple 30-year covenant that runs with the property, maintaining them as affordable units.

There was a discussion of the term “walkability” in the ordinance and how it refers to a concept that can be left to interpretation. This term needs to be defined.

Mr. Kelso suggested considering an overlay district rather than a blanket ordinance change to the LI district.

Andrew Griffin, Solicitor for Doylestown Borough, requested that the Planning Commission table their recommendation in order to allow the Borough time to review the text amendment and revised plans, and coordinate with the Township to see if this use is feasible for the property in question. He added that the Borough parcel would be the sole means of ingress and egress for the development. He further noted that it appears the basis for the text amendment is to facilitate this project.

John Davis, Doylestown Borough Manager asked to reorient this process to where the Borough can meaningfully participate. He suggested that after going to the Board of Supervisors, it returns to the Planning Commission.

Phil Ehlinger, Deputy Borough Manager noted working with this developer in the past and the great work that they do, but questioned whether this is the right property for this type of development. There

is currently a demand for LI. He also questioned the lack of buffer, and the 30-year deed restriction, adding that it is not a very long time.

Jason Duckworth from Arcadia Land Co., the developer, noted the numerous appearances before both the Township and Borough, and the wish for input from all parties. He added that the Borough used a zoning ordinance to facilitate the project across the street, adding that this side of the Broad Street corridor is almost entirely residential, with market value homes. This project would offer the only affordable or low-income option in the area. He further noted that all adjoining property owners are in favor of this proposal.

Ms. Mason noted that this will go to the Board of Supervisors in November, and they will have to open the hearing regardless. Whether they choose to approve or table it is up to them.

Ms. Hendrixson added that they could suggest to the Board that they consider a little more time for a meeting between the Township and Borough.

Mr. Kelso made a motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the Planning Commission supports the Township's efforts to introduce affordable housing, but that the Planning Commission has concerns about the ordinance in its current form relating to the future after the 30 year limit is up, the lack of buffering adjoining LI and other nonresidential uses, the maximum density of 30 units per acre, and allowing streets to abut side and rear property lines and go through proposed lots. Furthermore, the definitional aspects of the ordinance need to be further addressed, and it is recommended that the ordinance be reconsidered as to its application throughout the LI districts. Ms. Hendrixson seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-1 with Mr. Repko voting nay.

Ms. Hendrixson questioned Mr. Repko's vote on the ordinance. He indicated that outside of the 30-year time limitation he supports the other aspects of the proposed ordinance.

Adjournment

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 8:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kaitlyn Finley
Office Manager, Code Enforcement