

Minutes from the
DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
April 22, 2013

The Doylestown Township Planning Commission Regular Meeting was held at 7:00 p.m., Monday, April 22, 2013 in the Doylestown Township Municipal Building, 425 Wells Road, Doylestown, PA. Members of the Planning Commission in attendance included: Chairman; Judy Hendrixson, Vice Chairman; Kenneth L. Snyder with members, Thomas Kelso and George Lowenstein.

Planning Commission members absent: Edward Redfield

Absent: Township Manager; Stephanie J. Mason, Board of Supervisor Liaison; Richard F. Colello and Township Planning Consultant; Ms. Judy Stern Goldstein. In Ms. Stern Goldstein's absence, Ms. Karen Morgan Mallo was present.

Review of Minutes:

In the form of a motion by Mr. Lowenstein; seconded by Mr. Snyder the March 20, 2013 Doylestown Township Planning Commission Regular meeting minutes were approved.

Motion carried 3 to 0.

Public\Commission Comments: None

Illegal Temporary Signs:

Upon reviewing Director of Code Enforcement; Sinclair Salisbury's April 17, 2013 memorandum, the Planning Commission agreed by consensus they are in favor of Mr. Salisbury's recommendation to apply an approval sticker to temporary advertisement signs upon payment of a permit at \$50.00.

Mr. Lowenstein suggested all information regarding the temporary sign stickers should be included in the township's newsletter / website and broadcasted on Doylestown Television (DTV).

Workshops:

Ms. Hendrixson questioned what type of businesses would the township like to attract and should the businesses reside in certain areas. She also questioned if the businesses fit within the zoning requirements or should the requirements be amended. Ms. Hendrixson then asked the commission to recommend any areas that should be reviewed. Mr. Lowenstein suggested the Edison Furlong area.

Mr. Kelso commented Doylestown Township has the biggest employers in Bucks County, such as Doylestown Hospital, Delaware Valley College, Central Bucks School District and the Central Bucks County facilities. In the 1970s, most of the area was zoned for institutional to focus on the pharmaceutical industry and nothing happened. Mr. Kelso added, historically Doylestown Township has been magnetic for small professional services, which seems

to work for the region. Mr. Kelso then noted Delaware Valley College is looking into leasing their property located near the Neamand Tract in which the commission should review to change the zoning from R1 District.

Mr. Snyder questioned if the commission will view properties to change zoning in order to make more enticing or to fill vacant building. Also, how does the commission plan to fill the existing building with businesses. Ms. Hendrixson answered; the commission cannot spot zone for a particular building. Currently, the only building unoccupied is the Blueberry Hill Group offices located off Route 611 and Almshouse Road. Ms. Hendrixson then commented should the commission review properties, such as Delaware Valley College to re-zone as a mixed use. Mr. Kelso responded the township should first support the institutions that drives the township. He then suggested looking into changing the zoning on the Neamand Tract to match what they entered and apply the same to Delaware Valley College and other properties without spot zoning. Mr. Kelso added the Neamand property can also work as a transit oriented development to provide what people are looking for.

Mr. Lowenstein suggested reviewing what Dublin Township has currently zoned in the area along Route 313 near the Bridal Shop. Mr. Kelso agreed stating it's an opportunity to zone for Village Commercial, Office Retail and Residential. Ms. Morgan Mallo questioned if commercial zoning was involved and what would be the mixed use. Mr. Kelso answered; only Residential and Professional Offices with no commercial use involved, as with the Neamand Tract. He then suggested rezoning the area along Bristol Road and Upper State Road where larger tracts are located. Ms. Hendrixson agreed, but noted if the existing nursery was not included, more land would be available.

The commission agreed to review the Castle Valley, Fountainville and Furlong area for possible rezoning.

Route 313:

Ms. Morgan Mallo presented the commission with a map of the Route 313 corridor and reported in a collaboration with the other townships certain areas were viewed for possible redevelopment along Route 313 and Swamp Road. At a recent Buckingham Township meeting, it was agreed the next step would be to bring in Bucks County to provide their review for redevelopment. Mr. Kelso noted a plan has already been placed and with positive results. Ms. Morgan Mallo added; Doylestown Township's concern is the triangle area between North Main Street and Old Easton Road where there is lack of parking and visual impact, such as viewing the back of buildings. The goal is to develop a cohesive area for joint business recruitment without changing zoning.

Mr. Kelso noted Buckingham is not a good area to choose for redevelopment because the idea has already been successfully addressed. Ms. Hendrixson indicated Doylestown Borough has not been addressed.

Upon a discussion amongst the commission and Ms. Morgan Mallo, the commission agreed not to comment on the redevelopment plan along Route 313 along Swamp Road since a plan is already in place. Ms. Morgan Mallo questioned if the commission has any comments to add such as with the lighting standards.

Mr. Kelso commented he disagrees with the township's ornate lighting standards because they are not aging well. Mr. Lowenstein responded that standards followed Doylestown Borough. Ms. Morgan Mallo noted Doylestown Borough currently has single lighting standards and Doylestown Township has double lighting standards. Ms. Hendrixson suggested to keep consistent with the current Doylestown Borough lighting standards. Mr. Kelso and Mr. Snyder agreed.

Upon a question from Mr. Lowenstein, Ms. Morgan Mallo clarified there is no pedestrian lighting. Only goose neck overhead lighting is provided to illuminate the intersections. The only sidewalks are along the streets where the Department of Transportation (DOT) does not permit lighting. A grass strip and/or separation is required. Ms. Morgan Mallo stated the idea is to keep a standard lighting consistent and have a plan recorded in the books for future development along the entire corridor. Mr. Kelso suggested the Airport Authority be included in the redevelopment meetings because of their recent purchases of several properties along Route 313.

Trees:

Mr. Lowenstein commented if Boucher & James will be submitting redevelopment ideas with regards to trees for commercial properties. Mr. Kelso agreed and provided an example with the Blueberry Hill development along Route 611 and Almshouse Road. Ms. Morgan Mallo was unaware of the request and questioned if the township has a clause that states trees can be planted elsewhere. Mr. Lowenstein clarified current township ordinances only focuses on trees for residential properties and not commercial. Ms. Hendrixson added the ordinances doesn't work for a commercial sites needing visibility where in some cases it's key. Trees in which cannot be planted on site, also cannot be planted elsewhere in the township due to a lack of space.

A discussion ensued amongst the commission and Ms. Morgan Mallo regarding what options can be presented to resolve issues along the Blueberry Hill development plan. Mr. Kelso stated he doesn't believe the commission can do anything with zoning other than tweaking some items for the Blueberry Hill Group. Ms. Hendrixson added imperious surface and the landscaping requirements are the main issues and too difficult to make work commercially.

Ms. Morgan Mall questioned if the tree regulations need to be tweaked for commercial use regardless or just for the Blueberry Hill site. Mr. Kelso and Ms. Hendrixson both agreed the township ordinance for all commercial use should be reviewed closer to change standards. Mr. Lowenstein noted a previous recommendation submitted to change the imperious was turned down. However, it will be beneficial to review again.

Economic Development:

Ms. Morgan Mallo questioned if Doylestown Township would consider an economic development arm. Mr. Lowenstein responded; Doylestown Borough oversaw most economic development, except for some streets. This was the reason entranceways began to be reviewed. Mr. Kelso added the township is built out and redevelopment was already completed years ago where currently the township is in great shape. Mr. Lowenstein indicated the township were reviewing smaller issues and not in the position to have a whole industrial plan. Ms. Morgan Mallo clarified the township has not actively recruited anyone and only presented the idea as an option.

Ms. Hendrixson noted many single family homes are being rented out for student housing. She then questioned if the commission would like to take some control in zoning these homes for apartments, because they are not well taken care of. Mr. Lowenstein responded he doesn't believe the township has jurisdiction over the matter. Mr. Kelso noted the township previously tried to zone for affordable housing and the county never finished the study. He then added, it will be difficult to legislature student housing other than regulating. Ms. Hendrixson indicated it can be done by density, but will not be cheap. Mr. Kelso responded; unless you become involved in controlling rental pricing and the percentage, it will not become affordable to students.

Mr. Snyder questioned if there are any other properties which are not developed. Mr. Kelso answered; most of Delaware Valley College is preserved, except for one corner parcel, farm 7 and a farm located west of Almshouse Road. These areas are hilly and not suitable for commercial or industrial use.

Ms. Morgan Mallo questioned the commission if there is anything else they would like reviewed with the zoning ordinance. Ms. Hendrixson recommended to begin with the four areas discussed in tonight's meeting.

Ms. Hendrixson concluded by requesting the commission email any recommendations to the Township Manager; Stephanie Mason to place on future Planning Commission agendas.

Mr. Kelso added before reviewing any issues the commission should first discuss the matter with Ms. Mason. Second; create an outline to be presented to the Board of Supervisors for approval to avoid unnecessary time and expense. He then suggested to begin by resubmitting new zoning options for the Fountainville area for Board approval.

Adjournment: 8:43 p.m.