

DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Monday, July 25, 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, July 25, 2022. Members of the Doylestown Township Planning Commission in attendance included Judy Hendrixson, Chairman; members Tom Kelso, Ted Feldstein, and Jill Macauley. Others in attendance included Stephanie Mason, Township Manager; Stacey Yoder, from Gilmore & Associates, Jen Herring, Board of Supervisors Liaison, and Sinclair Salisbury, Director of Code Enforcement.

The meeting officially began at 7:01 pm.

Review of Minutes

On motion of Mr. Kelso and seconded by Ms. Macauley, the June 27, 2022 minutes were unanimously approved.

Public/Commission Comments/Presentations

None.

Items Scheduled for Discussion

Advertising on EV Chargers – Continued Discussion

Ms. Hendrixson opened the discussion regarding EV charging stations and the question as to when they are proposed with advertising.

Ms. Mason asked for a summary of the appeal to the Zoning Hearing Board.

Mr. Salisbury provided a summary of the Volta appeal to install EV charging stations with advertising at the Giant on Easton Road. The Township Zoning Hearing Board suggested moving the chargers out of the high traffic area, where they can be a distraction, toward cart retrieval. Not wanting to stray from their current business model, Volta did not wish to make this compromise, and the appeal was denied by the ZHB.

Ms. Mason asked if Warminster Township had experienced any issue with these type of chargers in their municipality.

Mr. Salisbury indicated that they did not relay any issues.

Ms. Yoder suggested that Warrington currently has more regulations regarding EV chargers.

Mr. Kelso reiterated that Warrington's zoning ordinance has specific provisions for EV charging stations, specifically that they should be in more remote areas away from principal buildings.

Ms. Yoder informed the group that Warrington had received an application to put charging stations near the Amazon Fresh on Easton Road. The township's decision included a condition that they do not have advertising.

Ms. Macauley summarized her own research regarding EV chargers. She explained a trend toward supermarkets becoming a primary source of EV charging, and that it is projected that by 2025 10% of the parking allocation will need to have EV charging. It is also likely that by 2030 this will jump to 30%. She also noted that the primary charging space will still be an individual's private residence.

Ms. Hendrixson commented that as more and more chargers are added, advertising on them could become overwhelming.

Mr. Salisbury added that the business model need not be to give away a trickle charge, instead users could pay for it. He also commented that the Volta chargers only projected flashing visuals, no sound.

Ms. Hendrixson added that they don't make sense in locations that are only a quick stop. For example, at a Wawa there isn't enough time spent there.

Mr. Kelso explained that he sees multiple issues and suggested separating advertising from the EV chargers in order to analyze the issue.

Mr. Salisbury further explained that as with the sign ordinance, this is a quality-of-life issue. This doesn't change because the advertising is on an EV charger. EV chargers would be permitted if they are not combined with advertising.

Mr. Kelso added that use, either accessory or primary, has not been identified, and this needs to be looked at.

Ms. Mason also added that there is a parking space issue. Spaces for EV chargers may need to be allocated.

Ms. Hendrixson then asked if an applicant comes in with a new use for a property, and there is a different parking requirement, should EV chargers be included in that? She added that it could be linked to a business use, but it doesn't make sense everywhere.

Mr. Kelso raised the question as to whether the Township can tell a business that they have to install EV chargers.

Ms. Hendrixson asked about the cost for installation.

Ms. Yoder replied that the approximate cost to install a level 2 could be \$12-\$18K; and a fast-charging station upward of \$45k.

Ms. Hendrixson then asked if any of that money gets recovered.

Ms. Mason suggested that many of these chargers require payment for the charge. Otherwise, there is little return on installation costs.

Mr. Feldstein asked if there was a possibility that businesses could be required to have EV chargers under accessibility.

Mr. Salisbury said there is no requirement in the code for mandating EV chargers, unless it is in a municipality's local code.

Ms. Hendrixson then asked if an applicant comes in and wants to add EV chargers, but are not adding additional spaces, is this, okay?

Mr. Kelso replied that most lots are oversized anymore and are designed for peak usage.

Ms. Mason added that the current parking requirement is much more than what is really needed.

Mr. Kelso suggested looking at how this use can be defined under parking.

Ms. Hendrixson then asked if it should also be addressed under the energy ordinance.

Ms. Mason responded that it primarily falls under zoning.

Mr. Kelso asked about the difference between primary and accessory use. Does someone need a zoning permit to put one in their house?

Ms. Mason said that they do not. Only an electrical permit is required. She also added that as EV chargers are trending, they need to be addressed in the energy ordinance so that it is easily interpreted and not a burden on businesses.

Ms. Macauley asked how the ordinance could encourage and support this convenience, especially since it is a benefit to the planet. She suggested that there be some suggested requirements.

Mr. Kelso raised the question of whether the Township can legally enforce that someone add a use to a property?

Ms. Macauley then asked if it could be considered more like a utility?

Mr. Salisbury clarified that it is more of a use. The Township does not require gas pumps anywhere, and this is a particular use. He also suggested that going forward the ordinance use the term alternative fuel, rather than limiting it to EV charging.

Mr. Kelso added that the Township shouldn't create a burden with regulations. People will still mostly charge at home. He added that once the use is defined, they will have the ability to address it.

Ms. Hendrixson ended the discussion by reiterating that to move ahead a definition is needed, along with the proper wording to make it a use. She suggested that the Planning Commission aim for next month to bring some examples of that and suggestions of where it fits into the ordinance.

Easton Road Bike & Hike Trail Project – DCED MTF Grant Application

Ms. Mason informed the Planning Commission that the Bike & Hike Committee submitted a grant application to extend the trail from along Easton Road at the traffic light at the new Wawa in the Borough and to run it down and tie in with the Tabor trail there over the bridge. It would be 8-10 feet wide and include a 5-foot landscape buffer. It is required as part of the application that the Planning Commission is given notice of the intent.

Mr. Kelso asked if an official letter is needed from the Planning Commission.

Ms. Mason said yes, and that a letter is in progress.

Ms. Mason then informed the group of some changes to the Planning Commission. With one member resigning immediately, and another at the end of the year, the Board of Supervisors has conducted interviews for new appointees.

Ms. Herring added that the two new appointees are both very knowledgeable and excited to get to work with the Planning Commission.

Plans Scheduled for Discussion

None.

Sketch Plans Scheduled for Discussion

Ms. Mason mentioned that the Village Center draft has been circulated since the last meeting.

Mr. Kelso requested that the Planning Commission look at it again and see that it still makes sense.

Ms. Hendrixson also noted that at the last EAC meeting they discussed putting together a citizens climate action subcommittee and would like to see if a member of the Planning Commission is interested.

Ms. Herring added that they are looking to apply for a program through the DEP where they would get assistance from students to develop a local climate action plan for the Township.

Ms. Mason added that they have to apply and be accepted.

Ms. Macauley also suggested that the Planning Commission have a work session to discuss the comprehensive plan with the new members.

There was then a discussion regarding scheduling and the next few planned meetings. It was determined that the work session would be settled on for September or October.

Adjournment

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kaitlyn Finley
Office Manager, Code Enforcement