

DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Monday, January 24, 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, January 24, 2022. Members of the Doylestown Township Planning Commission in attendance included Judy Hendrixson, Chairman; Gregory Reppa, Vice Chairman; members Tom Kelso, Ted Feldstein, and Jill Macauley. Others in attendance included Stacy Yoder from Gilmore & Associates, Planning Consultant, Stephanie Mason, Township Manager, Sinclair Salisbury, Director of Code Enforcement, and Jennifer Herring, Board of Supervisors Liaison.

The meeting officially began at 7:03 pm.

Reorganization

Ms. Hendrixson opened the floor for nominations for chair and vice chair.

On motion from Mr. Reppa and seconded by Mr. Feldstein, Ms. Hendrixson was unanimously voted as Charmain.

On motion from Mr. Feldstein and seconded by Ms. Macauley, Mr. Reppa was unanimously voted as Vice Chairman.

Review of Minutes

On motion of Ms. Hendrixson and seconded by Mr. Feldstein, the December 15, 2021 minutes were unanimously approved.

Public/Commission Comments/Presentations

There was a brief discussion regarding presentations and utilizing the technology available. Mr. Kelso indicated that the new sound panels is helping the acoustics in the room. Mr. Salisbury clarified that all applications going forward will be requested come in with a digital copy ready for the presentation.

Plans Scheduled for Discussion

N/A

Items Scheduled for Discussion

1. Future Commercial Properties
2. Age-Friendly Communities
3. Green Energy Initiatives

Ms. Hendrixson opened a conversation regarding the above three items and how they will be a focus for the Planning Commission this year. She added that the conversation should continue with developers regarding changes post-covid. There was also a question as to what the EAC is working on for the Township owned properties.

Mr. Reppa reminded the group that he was appointed to work with the EAC regarding an energy proposal from a zoning and land development aspect.

Ms. Mason explained that the EAC made a presentation to the Board of Supervisors regarding solar initiatives and moving that along. They are also looking at geothermal for the new Park and Rec building.

Mr. Salisbury reminded the group that the Township's Green Points Ordinance should be rewritten because of new Codes, and that it should be analyzed what the Township is giving points for.

Ms. Mason added that the ordinance will be amended once those codes are in place.

Mr. Salisbury explained that many of the green initiatives are encouraged by code already, but it depends on the customer's or the builder's price point. They are much more expensive.

Ms. Hendrixson offered that tax rebates are often an incentive and help to offset installation costs.

Ms. Mason added that taxes on the municipal level are very small, so these incentives are more valuable in larger cities.

Mr. Kelso suggested that increased density could be an incentive in this case.

Ms. Macauley asked if increasing density is something that should be encouraged.

Ms. Mason clarified that the increases in density are not large scale, just add a few units here and there.

Mr. Salisbury added that increased density can encourage some of the more expensive installations for developers, but for affordability and cost-effective housing.

Mr. Kelso added that there is more opportunity here and reminded the group of a geothermal pump and dump system currently operating by Pine Run off of Shady Retreat.

Ms. Herring suggested that the Township partner with the County, as they are looking at these initiatives as well, especially for properties they own that are within the Township.

Ms. Hendrixson offered that it is important to consider massive changes over the next few years in how certain properties are used, for example shopping centers and parking lots. Some of these properties are energy hogs and could be good spots for solar fields, recharge stations, etc. The Planning Commission should be ready for that.

Ms. Herring asked if any municipalities offer any other incentives besides a reduction in fees.

Mr. Salisbury replied that we are not aware of any at this time.

Ms. Mason added that in some areas there has been a changeover from commercial to housing properties, creating a kind of "downtown" existence.

Ms. Hendrixson suggested that the group do some research and see what is going on elsewhere and what can be done here in order to be prepared.

Ms. Macauley asked how progress is tracked in regard to the comp plan - how do we identify gaps and needs? She then asked what special projects are currently taking place that the PC should be aware of.

Ms. Mason explained that the Township has a strategic plan in place from '99 and the Park Rec & Open Space Comp Plan was recently updated in 2021. These plans are often broad, but are reviewed, and the

Township is always looking at achieving the goals set forth. Current major projects include the park and rec building, and also those focused on through the budget process, including roads and bridges, and properly funding of the pension plan.

Ms. Hendrixson added that tracking progress is a good idea.

Ms. Mason also said that they are looking to update the Township's 537 Plan. She summarized the plan saying that it is the Township's sewage facilities plan and includes those areas with on lot septic and how to maintain them, as well as where improvements might be needed in the next 5 or 10 years. This also includes the current sewer project in the Pebble Ridge/Woodridge area that includes 250 homes.

Mr. Kelso asked what the Township's plan is for spending 1.2 million from Covid ARP infrastructure relief.

Ms. Mason replied that it would be spent on storm sewers as part of the required MS4 program. She clarified that this money can not be used for roads and spoke with PSATS about that. By focusing on MS4 however, it will free up some money previously allocated for that use. The program requires a lot of record keeping and the Township needs to meet certain standards regarding discharge of solids, etc. The Township has worked over the years to do the required research and manage hotspots.

Mr. Salisbury added that this program has also identified failing septic systems and the sewers have been a big help with that.

Mr. Kelso suggested that there is still raw sewage going into streams and that this money would be better spent on water quality and possibly fixing individual systems that are the biggest offenders.

Ms. Mason replied that 1 million is not enough to cover this problem, but where sewers are currently going in was a big problem area. It is a success to have sewers going in there.

Mr. Reppa asked for an update on the walk through at the Edison Furlong property that was previously discussed in a sketch plan at Planning Commission.

Ms. Mason said the property owner/relator have not submitted any plans yet, but that they heard from the Pebble Hill neighbors and their thoughts will be taken into consideration.

Mr. Kelso added that the meeting brought about some good ideas for redesigning the plan to be more pleasing from the road.

Sketch Plans scheduled for Discussion

N/A

Adjournment

Ms. Hendrixson ended the meeting asking that the board members research some other incentive programs as homework. The meeting adjourned at 7:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kaitlyn Finley, Township Code Secretary