

## DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

### Regular Meeting – Held via Zoom

February 22, 2021

### Meeting Minutes

The Doylestown Township Planning Commission Regular Meeting was held at 7:00 pm, Monday, February 22, 2021. This meeting was held via Zoom. Members of the Doylestown Township Planning Commission in attendance included Judy Hendrixson, Chairman; Gregory Reppa, Vice Chairperson; members Tom Kelso, Ted Feldstein and Jill Macauley. Others in attendance included Judy Stern Goldstein, Township Planning Consultant; Jen Herring and Nancy Santacecilia, Board of Supervisors Liaisons; Sinclair Salisbury, Director of Code Enforcement; Stephanie Mason, Township Manager and Sean Torpey, Township Engineer.

Due to technical difficulty, there is no recording of this meeting. The meeting officially began at 7:12 pm.

#### **Review of Minutes**

On motion of Mr. Reppa and seconded by Mr. Kelso the January 25<sup>th</sup> minutes were unanimously approved.

#### **Public/Commission Comments**

No public comment.

#### **Plans Scheduled for Discussion**

##### **60 Meetinghouse Road – Presentation:**

Ben Goldthorpe, developer, and Rob Cunningham of Cunningham & Associates engineer for the project were in attendance to present updates to the proposed plan. Key changes included: access road onto Meetinghouse shifted towards Sandy Knoll to line up with driveway across the street; Maintained buffer around perimeter and around neighbor in center and provided walking trail; stormwater management improved and maintained for 10 single family homes; some light buffer trees added, also maintained existing evergreen buffer; modified grading to keep buffer. They further expressed that they would comply with requests in review letters from Township staff and consultants.

Mr. Goldthorpe brought up several items to discuss. First item was ownership and maintenance of new proposed road.

Ms. Hendrixson explained that the Township generally prefers to keep it private because it is not a public street. Question raised about turning radius for emergency vehicles. Mr. Goldthorpe explained that they would comply as per traffic engineer's review letter.

Ms. Hendrixson raised question of parking on the street. Mr. Goldthorpe said they will add signage for parking on one side of street, and that there is enough width to do that.

Mr. Kelso asked if the street was long enough to meet requirements for Money from PennDOT. Ms. Mason explained as a private street it would not qualify. Maintenance would be the responsibility of the HOA. Mr. Goldthorpe brought up the suggestion to widen the road at the front edge of property but said they will comply with any option the Township/traffic engineer prefers.

Ms. Hendrixson said the consensus is not to widen the road to keep speed down.

Ms. Santacecilia raised the question that this could be a school bus safety issue because of the hill as vehicles turn.

Ms. Hendrixson said this could be helped with a taper of the road.

Mr. Reppa asked what the situation is with drainage without curve or taper.

Mr. Cunningham explained that at the highpoint of Meetinghouse there are currently no issues with drainage. Stormwater can be treated and managed in a basin with some extra capacity.

Mr. Reppa expressed concern about people walking along roadway because it is difficult to see coming down Meetinghouse and over the hill. Could be a pedestrian safety concern. Ms. Mason explained that a trail is required and is being proposed for pedestrians and cyclists.

Ms. Hendrixson asked if there were any thoughts or comments from the neighbors in this area.

Lindsay Miller of 69 Meetinghouse liked the idea of the path but believes people will likely stay on the road. Also raised the question of children getting to the bus stop at Sandy Knoll. Especially after it snows, it is hard to reach the school bus stop at the intersection of Meetinghouse and Sandy Ridge.

Gaiath Kolandaivelu of 56 Meetinghouse agreed with Ms. Miller's comments.

Ms. Hendrixson confirmed that these neighbors are not in favor of widening the road.

John Wilkinson of 65 Meetinghouse expressed that he would like the road to be left as near a condition as it is now.

Mr. Torpey clarified comments from traffic engineer Matt Johnston that the suggestion is to provide a 175-foot taper at the west edge of the road, not to widen it.

Ms. Kolandaivelu (56 Meetinghouse) expressed concern that with an increased number of houses, traffic, etc. there is more need to widen the road. It will not be supported as designed.

Susan Albert of 77 Meetinghouse asked if a sidewalk would make more sense in the area in question.

Mr. Kelso agreed that pedestrian safety would be improved with a sidewalk, not widening the roadway.

Ms. Goldstein asked where the break is for the bus stop. Ms. Miller (69 Meetinghouse) explained that in speaking with the School District, they have the option of either Sandy Ridge or Sandy Knoll, but don't go to Sandy Knoll because of the hill. There are no good options with snow. PennDOT has not deemed this a dangerous road. Ms. Kolandaivelu (56 Meetinghouse) expressed that the trail area is not always cleared of snow.

Ms. Mason explained that trails are cleared after the roadways but will follow up with Public Works. There could be some difficulty getting equipment to this area.

Richard Spotts of 73 Meetinghouse explained that the trail is not connected, its dead ends now in their area. Although it was pointed out going in the other direction there is a lot of trail connections.

Ms. Hendrixson said that the roadway issue and trail needs a closer look.

Mr. Goldthorpe brought up street lighting as the next item in question. He then asked for clarification from review letters. Ms. Goldstein clarified that they are not asking for more lighting, just details of fixtures.

There was discussion about the need for additional lighting. Light posts at driveways are not proposed because of porch lights. No lighting is included in the cul-de-sac. Mr. Goldthorpe said they would investigate low level lighting, or a bollard as proposed by Ms. Goldstein and clarified by Ms. Hendrixson. Mr. Reppa also agreed. Ms. Goldstein explained that traditionally it is expected that a light be added at an intersection of a proposed street with an existing street.

Peter Rockafellow of 30 Hickory Lane, expressed that cul-de-sac lighting is not needed, just one light at end of street.

Ms. Mason explained in response to the safety concern in the cul-de-sac, that the Township would likely require traditional fencing along the basin in the form of a split rail fence. They may require a bollard, but typically the traditional streetlight is a colonial luminaire mounted on a wooden post at the street entrance.

Mr. Goldthorpe then proposed a few waivers they are requesting. First was to provide an aerial view in lieu of providing a survey to show neighboring tracts. Mr. Reppa expressed that it should show homes on adjacent properties.

Next waiver requested by Mr. Goldthorpe was to propose a driveway separation of 5 feet from the property line even though the ordinance requires 10 feet. This allows for easier turn around in driveways.

Next waiver requested was regarding preservation of 6-to-12-inch caliper trees. In order to fit the trail, this would require removal of trees. But trees will be replaced.

Ms. Goldstein asked that they use native species from the list provided by the Township EAC (Environmental Advisory Council). She also clarified that the tree protection waiver is needed first, before a waiver for tree removal.

Ms. Kolandaivelu (56 Meetinghouse) explained that lots 2 and 3 are in line with her living room and in-law suite which are glass. She requested larger trees to preserve privacy.

David Snyder of 46 Hickory also requested that trees be staggered rather than in one row to provide more privacy.

Ms. Miller expressed concern over trees that produce a lot of leaves as they can get stuck in drainage pipes along the roadway.

Ms. Hendrixson agreed there is a consensus for more trees. Mr. Goldthorpe expressed willingness to work with the Township to include appropriate trees of native species and more evergreens. He also requested a waiver for landscaping to permit greater than 25% replacement of trees.

The last waiver requested by Mr. Goldthorpe was to be able to grade within 5 feet of the property line between lot 9 and 10 in order to smooth out the area. Mr. Reppa asked if this will effect drainage. Mr. Cunningham explained that a basin is expected to capture all water grading within 5 feet, so it slopes into their site. This will ensure no negative effects to properties. Mr. Cunningham also agreed to ensure that there is no grading within drip line or a minimum of 15 feet within the trunk of a tree by ordinance, as brought up by Ms. Goldstein.

Mr. Kelso does not want to grant a blanket waiver in regard to tree removal and protection. Mr. Goldthorpe expressed options for keeping contractors from crossing into properties.

Mr. Spotts (73 Meetinghouse) asked what type of vegetation is expected to grow in basin and how will it be maintained. Mr. Goldthorpe explained that it is designed as a managed release basin and best management practices will be used. It will be planted with wetland seed mix and cover crop and some additional landscape plants at the bottom of the basin. It will also be mowed regularly, but the bottom is a wetland mix with minimal maintenance. He ensured minimum separation distance for limiting zone required by DEP.

Mr. Goldthorpe also expressed that the notes on the plan would be revised to reflect access to areas for maintenance.

Mr. Kelso raised question of making open space deed restricted and part of individual lots. This will be looked at by Mr. Goldthorpe.

Ms. Goldstein explained that as a matter of ordinance, applicant is required to offer open space to the Township as one contiguous chunk. This could not be counted as part of minimum open space

requirement. Mr. Cunningham explained that they are currently right on the number for the open space requirement.

Mr. Snyder (46 Hickory) raised the question of going back to 1 acre lots so there is no open space on individual lots. Mr. Kelso expressed that this could also possibly not be a 10 lot subdivision. Mr. Goldthorpe agreed the maintenance of these areas needs to be looked at more. Ms. Kolandaivelu (56 Meetinghouse) said the overall consensus is to increase lots to 1 acre in order to reduce traffic, etc.

Mr. Kelso also brought up an issue of grading across from lot 2, at the northeast corner of lot 10.

Ms. Hendrixson expressed that the EAC has requested that open space be woodlands rather than open fields wherever possible. Mr. Goldthorpe said they envisioned turf, but will look at adding vegetation.

Darrell Sehlin of 308 Sandy Knoll asked if the grading was going to change relative to the current property line. He also asked what type of landscaping is going to be done across from lots 8 and 9.

Mr. Goldthorpe explained that no grading changes will be made, and it is 40-50 feet from the property line. He also said that the landscaping question will be addressed with the next plan, and they will consider returning areas to woodlands as requested by the EAC.

Ms. Goldstein explained that woodland does not mean planting trees. Woodlands would not be mowed, and that does not include turf. Ms. Herring further expressed that the intent of the EAC is to preserve the wildlife habitat and environment overall.

Mr. Sehlin (308 Sandy Knoll) expressed his preference of a woodland barrier.

Mr. Rockafellow (30 Hickory Lane) asked if the area behind his property could be deed restricted. Mr. Kelso explained that this would depend on how it is written and what restrictions could be put in place.

Mr. Kelso also expressed concern over the stormwater inlet now behind lots 2 and 3, and believes those inlets will fail sooner or later, and could fail easily. The area will build up and water will escape down the property line between lot 2 and 3. The grading here needs to be looked at.

Mr. Cunningham explained that they looked at this in depth, and that there is not enough fall for a basin. They upsized the pipes to allow for a drainage system on Maple Leaf. They are aware it may overflow, but the intention is that larger pipes allow it to get further down and treated in a large basin.

Mr. Kelso expressed that a swail between lot 1 and 2 may be better. Mr. Cunningham said this will be looked at.

Ms. Kolandaivelu (56 Meetinghouse) said there is a flooding issue close to this area. Mr. Cunningham reiterated that he believes the pipes will be sufficient for drainage onto their property and not the residents'.

Mike Carr, attorney on behalf of Peter & Jennifer Hartkorn of 95 Meetinghouse commented and said they are opposed to widening the road. They are happy to see trails and paths on the opposite side of the street. In addition, they believe public water and sewer is a good plan.

Roy Vernick of 77 Meetinghouse raised the question of bringing natural gas into the development. Mr. Goldthorpe said this has not yet been determined, but if it is within 300 to 400 feet of the property it could be considered. More than that, probably not.

Mr. Snyder asked if it was possible to get a pdf of the plans before the next meeting. Ms. Mason said the Township will make sure to provide it and will provide revised plans ahead of time as well.

Mr. Reppa expressed concerns over whether the location of tapering the road would cause a safety issue at the driveway for the out parcel along Meetinghouse. Mr. Goldthorpe said this would be looked at.

Jeannie Kofron of 33 Maple Leaf asked what the timeline would be for the project and if they should expect construction vehicles through Maple Leaf. Mr. Goldthorpe said the plan is to start construction later this year. It would be complete in roughly 3 -4 months, and after that then house construction could begin and take up to a year from that point. They are looking at the end of 2021 with people moving in through 2023. The construction entrance is planned to be on Meetinghouse. Nothing is proposed near Maple Leaf other than possibly small vehicles only.

Ms. Goldstein requested that the plans show the dripline of certain trees and the proper tree protection.

Mr. Goldthorpe said they would be back at next month's meeting with revisions and a new plan.

### **Items Scheduled for Discussion**

#### **Bucks County Planning Commission Module Alternative Energy Ordinance:**

Ms. Hendrixson asked for any comments regarding the model ordinance from BCPC and suggested that the incentives offered are a little bit weak. Mr. Kelso agreed that it can be hard to get to the requirement, but that it would be interesting to apply this ordinance to the subdivision just looked at. He said the fees are insignificant for the overall price of doing work. It should not be a blanket zoning ordinance.

Ms. Goldstein commented that the reality is that people who want to do it will, without the incentive, but it is still beneficial to look at and see what we can incorporate. There is something to be learned from it.

Ms. Hendrixson expressed that the incentives may be stronger for commercial development.

Ms. Goldstein suggested that alternate energy could be a way for a developer to achieve the density they want. Ms. Macauley raised the question as to whether this contradicts what the ordinance is trying to do. It could be the wrong way to go if the goal is what is best for the environment. Ms. Goldstein reiterated that the ordinance was intended for that reason. She offered a reminder of the Green Points ordinance in the Township, which is intended for individual property owners, whereas they could receive a reduction in permit fees. However, it may not be a big enough reduction to encourage people who otherwise would not be interested in greener practices to do so.

Ms. Mason suggested a possible joint meeting with the EAC, as they are interested in going through the ordinance as well.

Mr. Kelso suggested this ordinance could be used in shopping center areas, or on the County's property and in the RFI they are developing. The township is in position to provide direction.

Ms. Hendrixson asked if there could be a joint session with the EAC and developers. Ms. Goldstein said that the EAC might not be familiar with the developers and how they operate.

Ms. Hendrixson commented that there might be some animosity between planning commission, bike, and hike and EAC. The Planning Commission needs to understand where these boards are coming from and become familiar with what each is doing. The Boards should not be at odds.

Ms. Goldstein suggested that the chairmen could have a meeting, rather than integrate entire groups. Ms. Herring and Ms. Santacecilia both agreed they would like to participate in those meetings.

Ms. Hendrixson would like to set this up.

James Jones, a local contractor in the area requested a briefing on the Bucks County model ordinance. What would it do?

Ms. Mason offered that the information is available on the Bucks County Planning Commission website. There is a link to the ordinance. Ms. Hendrixson explained that it lays out promoting energy savings and green energy ordinances for construction and development, including some incentives like density for energy efficient design. It is just a draft ordinance and they are looking for feedback.

Ms. Hendrixson then questioned whether to set up another developer workshop for March. Ms. Macauley suggested holding off on the workshop until they can balance the developer mission with that of the EAC.

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:17 pm. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for Monday, March 22, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kaitlyn Finley

Secretary, Code Enforcement