

## **DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**

### **Regular Meeting**

**Wednesday, November 19, 2025 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 Wednesday, November 19, 2025. Members of the Doylestown Township Planning Commission in attendance included Judy Hendrixson, Chairman; Michael Kracht, Vice Chairman, and member Tom Kelso. Others in attendance included Stacy Yoder, Gilmore & Associates; Dan Wood, Board of Supervisors Liaison; and Stephanie J. Mason, Township Manager.

Not present at the meeting were members Jill Macauley and Robert Repko.

The meeting officially began at 7:00 pm.

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

None.

#### **Review of Minutes**

On a motion by Mr. Kelso, seconded by Mr. Kracht, the September 29, 2025 minutes were unanimously approved.

#### **Presentation**

N/A

#### **Land Development**

##### **Baia – Conditional Use Application – 1850 Turk Road**

Present on behalf of the applicant was attorney Sean Duffy. The applicant is proposing to build a single-family dwelling on the property in question. The proposed driveway runs through the riparian corridor and thus requires conditional use approval. Mr. Duffy explained that when the original property was subdivided into two lots, they were meant to have a shared driveway. That easement was never recorded, and the current property owner does not wish to grant the easement. The applicant has been to Zoning Hearing Board and received relief with regard to woodlands and steep slopes and has been before the Board of Supervisors due to the variable width driveway. They have been in receipt of a review letter from Gilmore, and all items are will comply. The applicant has hired a landscape architect who will develop a corridor management plan. They will be prepared for a hearing at next month's Board of Supervisors meeting.

Ms. Hendrixson asked if the driveway would be gravel or paved, and what would be done with the trees along the driveway's path.

Mr. Duffy said the driveway would be paved. There are three trees to be removed. This will be outlined by the landscape architect.

Mr. Kelso asked why the easement was never recorded.

Ms. Mason provided some history of the property and property owner, who intended for a family member to live on the second lot. This did not happen, and the family never followed through on the final documents. This issue was discussed with the Township solicitor and all parties involved.

Mr. Kelso made a motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that they approve the conditional use application as prepared, with the understanding that the applicant agrees to address all items in the Gilmore letter. Mr. Kracht seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

### **Other Business**

#### **Proposed Zoning Change/Amendment – Continued Discussion**

##### **Zaveta – Hart Property – 2250 S. Easton Road**

Ms. Yoder, representing Gilmore & Associates, recused herself, as Gilmore is working with Zaveta for this project. Craig Bryson, PLA, from Pennoni, and Libby Naughton from Clarke Gallagher Barbiero Amuso & Glassman Law sat in to represent the Township.

Mr. Kracht noted that he worked as a volunteer with the Historical Society in the past, but never as an attorney and not for this project, so he did not believe there was any conflict.

Present at the meeting were attorney Ed Murphy, Kyle McCoy, Executive Director from the Bucks County Historical Society (BCHS), along with several BCHS Board members, and Rich Zaveta, the developer.

Mr. Murphy explained that after presenting it to the Planning Commission in September, a site visit was held in October, which was well attended. They are back tonight to get feedback. There has been a draft of the south corridor overlay that has been submitted as part of the proposal. And there is further conversation needed regarding access to the property which has been of some concern. A traffic consultant has been engaged, and this issue will be further evaluated.

Ms. Hendrixson added that they had a great site visit which was very informative. The big question is that if this doesn't go through what does the change in zoning mean. Mr. Kelso added that the zoning change needs to make sense standing alone

Mr. Murphy said that the property would likely be relisted and sold to someone else.

Mr. Kracht asked what the by right density would be if the Township were to adopt the proposed change, and what protects the house and barn.

Mr. Murphy said it would be consistent with the plan itself and with the number of units measured over 24 acres. The text overlay would follow the development plan. He said that the house and barn are both contemplated on the plan, and the expectation is that they would be approving the land development plan at the same time.

Ms. Naughton explained that they view the text amendment as the best approach, with rezoning to R1, which has an existing class related to historic properties as a B15 use. This would add a multifamily component which would protect the historic property and control density. The historic structures would be protected within the zoning code.

There was some concern over what would happen if Zaveta did not develop this property, and discussion of how the zoning change would affect other large properties in the Township, for example the Burpee property.

Ms. Mason explained that the B15 use has been used many times to preserve historic homes

Mr. Kracht noted that he felt this conversation was a bit premature.

Ms. Naughton suggested that the applicant come back with a revised version that reflects the changes discussed.

Mr. Murphy explained that they are comfortable with the text amendment, will agree to conservation easements, zoning modifications, etc., and can do a revised draft.

Mr. Kelso noted that not just the buildings, but the setting, and the property itself is historic, one of only a few in the Township. He expressed some doubt as to whether this development is unique to the property, and that there might be options that could fit this site better.

There was a discussion over whether it is worth waiting if the Planning Commission intends to have a negative recommendation. Are there any changes that can be made to satisfy the concerns?

Ms. Hendrixson expressed concern over the overall land disturbance and wished to consider a more minimal approach.

Mr. Murphy explained that they are prepared to work with the solicitor to flesh out details, but the plan itself is not likely to change.

Ms. Mason noted that two Planning Commission members are missing, and that this can be discussed at the December meeting. By then there might be a traffic study and a draft of the ordinance to look at.

Ms. Hendrixson added that they need to understand the ramifications of the zoning change with regard to other properties.

Mr. Murphy said he is confident they can provide in writing any assurances that are needed.

John Everett of 2111 Turk Road asked if another traffic signal is proposed at the egress, and how many units are proposed.

Mr. Murphy replied that the intention would be to align this access point with the existing traffic signal that serves the Wawa across the street. But some neighbors have expressed fear over a permanent intersection with the neighboring subdivision.

A traffic study will be performed. But it was noted that this is up to PennDOT as it is their roadway. There are about 40 units proposed at the site.

Mr. Bryson asked about the commitment of property owners to maintain the historic structures properly.

Mr. Zaveta said that there would be an HOA document that would require good maintenance and order. The HOA would reserve the right to have the work done if the property owner does not comply and then assess fines and lien the property. Mr. Zaveta went on to express how carefully and painstakingly he studied this property and worked through developing the plan. He noted that he believes there is great uniqueness to it, which includes very specific and carefully chosen materials and methods for refurbishing and restoring the structures. He also expressed confidence that they can develop language to alleviate any concerns the Township may have. He added that there is nothing to stop someone else from buying the property and knocking everything down. He was presented with a tall order from the Historical Society, and he took this responsibility very seriously, to them, to the property itself, and to the neighbors, spending his own time and resources to make it work, even taking down some dead ash trees that might be posing a danger to some of the neighbors. He believes that with the cost of the preservation necessary, this cannot be done with smaller units at the property.

Mr. Kelso noted that the Planning Commission has only seen the plan since September, and that it needs time to go through it.

Mr. Zaveta agreed that the legal aspect is important and they are committed to that. He also said he could go back and consider cluster housing, but it would be a very difficult option.

The question of the house and barn remained a point of concern and discussion. Mr. Kracht added that the Zaveta representative at the site visit was not clear on that.

Mr. Zaveta clarified that even if the intent was to sell the buildings, the work is to be performed by Zaveta within the parameters discussed.

Mary Elizabeth Meininger of Cold Spring Creamery Road in Buckingham Township asked for clarification related to the zoning and the definition of preservation. Does it apply to the interior and exterior?

Ms. Naughton replied that within the zoning code, the preservation applies to the exterior. The interior can be changed.

Ms. Meininger noted that the buildings are like a sort of museum and will no longer hold the same value if the interiors are not preserved.

Ms. Hendrixson noted that we are not talking about a museum but a single-family home, which will need to be modernized and updated. Ms. Mason added that the historic properties list was created by resolution, this property being one of them. The Township created B-15 to try and save such buildings as much as possible, but some are derelict and only the facades can be preserved. Others are in better condition and can be preserved in their entirety.

Mr. Kelso said that preservation of those properties has also been encouraged, with incentives in the zoning ordinance to do that.

Ms. Meininger asked how this change could affect Fonthill, which has the same zoning.

Ms. Naughton replied that Fonthill would have to ask the same permissions. The goal here is not to add to I2, because it has limitations, and Fonthill would fall within that.

Kathryn Auerbach expressed concern that with the change of zoning, the Historical Society would be moving their storage facility to Fonthill. Mr. Mercer wished for that property to be maintained as an arboretum and bird sanctuary.

Mr. Murphy explained that this will be happening regardless of this project. The Historical Society's plan is to move their storage to Fonthill.

Ms. Mason added that such a project will go through land development, just like their existing facility did. She added that it is not within the Township's purview to determine how and where artifacts are stored or handled. They are only responsible for zoning and land development.

There was a question over whether the buildings/property are a national historic landmark. It is believed that the buildings may be, but the property is not.

Doreen Stratton of Doylestown Borough expressed how impressed she was with Mr. Zaveta and the work he has done. She is from an old Doylestown family and remembers this area before Doylestown Hunt was there and remembers climbing trees at Fonthill before it became an open museum. She presented an article she had written a couple years ago when she learned what was happening to the property and talked about the Lenape coming through the area. She asked if an independent environmental impact study could be done.

Mr. Kelso said that any developer will have to go through the museum commission and environmental studies would be needed there.

Mr. Murphy said that this analysis had not yet been completed, but they will do that. He confirmed that they will be back at the December meeting.

### **Adjournment**

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kaitlyn Finley  
Office Manager, Code Enforcement