

**DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**

**Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 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 Tuesday, May 26, 2026. Members of the Doylestown Township Planning Commission in attendance included Judy Hendrixson, Chairman; Michael Kracht, Vice Chairman; and members Tom Kelso, Robert Repko, and Amy Kaminski. Others in attendance included Judy Stern Goldstein, Planning Consultant, Gilmore & Associates; Dan Wood, Board of Supervisors Liaison; and Stephanie Mason, Township Manager.

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 March 23, 2026 minutes were unanimously approved.

**Land Development**

**651 N. Shady Retreat Road – Preliminary Land Development Plan – TP# 09-009-039**

Presenting the plan on behalf of the applicant was attorney Kellie McGowan. Also present was the engineer for the project, Kristen Holmes. The property currently has a historic structure on Shady Retreat Road, which will be improved, but the façade will remain. A B4 Townhouse development is proposed, with 9 townhomes in clusters of 3 that will sit along a cul-de-sac. The applicant has been before the Planning Commission before, and has since been to the Zoning Hearing Board, where they were granted zoning relief. Dwellings have been set as far back as possible from the neighbors on Mahogany Court, and so as not to disturb natural resources and wetlands at the back of the property. Stormwater management is proposed between two of the unit groups. There is also a proposed connection across Shady Retreat Road to an existing trail system, and crosswalks from the development and a sidewalk within. After receiving the latest set of review letters in May, the applicant is back before the Planning Commission. All review items are will comply with some waivers to be requested.

Ms. Hendrixson asked about a dark line on the plan at the bottom of the cul-de-sac.

Ms. Holmes said that it is a retaining wall, the 8-foot side facing the road, and the low side facing the adjacent property.

Ms. Holmes proceeded to go through each of the waiver requests.

**Section 153-12.C** A waiver to allow preliminary and final approval. She said that they have provided materials sufficient for both, have received comments that are clean and all will comply.

**Section 153-20.C(10)** The applicant has provided an aerial plan that meets some of the requirements for this section where existing features within 400 feet are required.

**Section 153-24.B.(2)(a)** A waiver from widening Shady Retreat Road, as the road nearly meets the required width in most places already. Additionally, the historic home would be negatively impacted.

**Section 153-25** A partial waiver from providing a multiuse trail and sidewalks along both sides of the proposed road. A sidewalk is proposed along one side, where there are no driveways to impact it.

There was a discussion of the crosswalk and what signage would be used. A flashing signal was also suggested. The applicant proposed striping and signage but no flashing signal.

**Section 153-27** A waiver to allow driveways closer than 5 feet to the side property line. This would coincide with the garages on each lot. The curvature of the cul-de-sac prevents the required distance.

It was asked what the proposed length of the driveways is.

Ms. Holmes said that they extend at least 20 feet beyond the right of way and are 20 feet wide to fit two cars across. They are approximately 36 feet from the curb to the house. She added that each unit will have a two-car garage, so they are individual driveways.

Ms. Kaminski asked about the turning radius for an emergency vehicle if a car is parked in the cul-de-sac.

Ms. Holmes said that they would look at the template and include these items on the revised plan. She added that at the request of the Fire Marshal, there will be signage to prohibit parking on one side of the street.

**Section 153-31.A(5)** A waiver that would allow construction within an easement, because access is needed to the stormwater basin, and the curvature of the cul-de-sac is constricting.

Ms. McGowan added that they will prepare required drainage easement agreements to this effect.

**Section 153-31.A(6)** A waiver to allow iron pins at corners of the easements where there are driveways or other features that would be hindered by a concrete marker.

**Section 153-34.B(3) and 34.E** A partial waiver to provide less than the required street trees. The location of the historic home, spacing of driveways, site triangles, utilities and stormwater facilities do not allow adequate space for tree plantings.

**Section 153-34.I** A partial waiver from providing the total number of replacement trees. The applicant is proposing 47 where 105 are required.

**Section 153-35.I(2)** A waiver to allow removal of more than 10% of 25–48-inch caliper trees.

Mr. Kracht noted that the applicant would be giving less than half of the trees required. Are they proposing to do anything else? And what is the Township's position?

Ms. Mason replied that in the past applicants have done tree bank donations, so that the Township can plant trees elsewhere.

Ms. McGowan added that they would agree to the Township's general practice.

Ms. Goldstein noted that that this would mean one tree to the tree bank for one tree they are required to plant. The Board would include this in the resolution if it is granted. She also explained that there are substantial plantings elsewhere and existing vegetation at the property that mitigate this requirement.

Mr. Kracht added that the maximized density proposed is what creates the limitations.

Ms. Hendrixson asked if there was space along the proposed road.

Ms. Holmes said that they are limited by the underground stormwater facility but will provide a ground cover along the road. She described the two stormwater facilities proposed; one underground that is parallel to the roadway and will capture flows from the roadway to a pipe out to the back of the property to a wooded area; and also, a surface basin with overflow piped to the back of the property.

There was a discussion as to whether these areas could be moved at all. Ms. Holmes said they are tight already, but they can look at it again. There was also a discussion of moving the sidewalk to the other side of the road, where it would cross driveways, creating other concerns.

Ms. McGowan said that they could challenge the landscape architect to look for additional tree planting areas. Even if they do not count toward the technical requirement, they would maintain the waiver from the street tree requirement and still contribute to the Township's tree bank. She noted that the road and bulb is set, as they have received zoning relief for that.

**Section 153-36.C(2)** Waiver to provide less than the average footcandle requirement for townhouses. They are proposing one street light, which is fitting and typical for the surrounding neighborhoods.

Mr. Repko noted a safety concern with only one street light and suggested adding one in the cul-de-sac.

Ms. Holmes said that they would certainly consider it. It is a small road, so won't be too far from the one street light proposed. The cul-de-sac is about 250 feet in length. Additionally, the homes themselves would provide adequate lighting.

Ms. Goldstein added that the one light is consistent with what has been done over the last 20 to 30 years. Additionally, other township committees are expressing concern over too much lighting and how it affects wildlife. It is not believed that safety will be jeopardized by not providing an additional light.

**Section 153-38.D(6) & 19, and 153-39.D(1)** A partial waiver regarding required slopes. The grading proposed will minimize tree disturbance and allow for buffer and basin plantings.

**Section 153-39.C.(5)** The last waiver permits grading within 5 feet of street right of way lines. Grading is required within the Shady Retreat right of way for installation of the new road and other improvements.

Ms. McGowan summarized that they have received updated review letters that are all will comply. Additionally, utilities will be taken out to Shady Retreat Road as opposed to the back of the property, to minimize encroachment on wetlands and natural resources. There will be an HOA, and the historic home will be part of it. Open space and the private road would be maintained by the HOA.

Mr. Kelso noted that the Township owns property abutting this area and suggested an easement at the rear of the property should the water authority wish to extend water mains, or for a Township trail.

Ms. McGowan said that they are agreeable to a blanket easement for future needs.

Mr. Kelso asked if they did soils testing in other areas. He asked about breaking up the stormwater subsurface area.

Ms. Holmes said that they did do testing as part of their NPDES permit. They are restricted by buffers, foundation setbacks, utilities, etc. They believe they are maximizing the stormwater facilities as presented.

Barbara Rocca of Mahogany Court said that her house is directly impacted by this proposal. When they bought their house, they were told that the area behind them is all wetlands and would never be built on. They are very disappointed. With all the restrictions and issues, she asked why anything would be built there. She believes they were lied to when they bought their house.

Ms. Hendrixson noted that it is not up to the Planning Commission whether they build there. It was the Zoning Hearing Board's decision to allow the zoning relief. The Zoning Hearing Board was held in October 2025.

It was noted that neighbors made objections at the Zoning Hearing Board and they were recorded at the time.

Marla Janik of Mahogany Court said that her property is behind where the stormwater basin is and asked for confirmation that there would not be additional runoff to her property.

Ms. Holmes said that there is a berm along the perimeter, so everything is contained within the basin. Should anything not be contained, there is a pipe to release it to the back of the property toward the creek. She added that as a general requirement, stormwater is designed and required to reduce flows from the property.

The Planning Commission discussed whether there would be any objection to any of the waivers and what conditions would be recommended.

Mr. Repko made a motion to recommend approval of the requested waivers subject to the conditions discussed, including the tree bank, and fees in lieu. Mr. Kelso seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Kelso made a motion to recommend preliminary final approval with the understanding that the applicant agrees to address all the issues identified in the consultant letters, and furthermore agrees to consider options for lighting in the cul-de-sac, provide a blanket easement to the Township over the

open space, that applicant understands that waivers do not relieve them of the fees in lieu that may be applied, and that applicant agrees to the Township standard requirement for the tree bank in lieu of trees replacement. Mr. Repko seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Kelso made a motion to recommend to the Board that they submit the Act 537 application to DEP. Mr. Repko seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

### **Other Business**

#### **Proposed Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance**

Ms. Hendrixson opened the discussion regarding the proposed ordinance.

Ms. Mason explained that the changes originated with the Zoning Hearing Board. The Chairman requested that an accessory family dwelling be a use by right rather than by special exception. Additional limitations would remain with regard to setbacks, size, number of people, etc.

Ms. Goldstein added that from there the Board expressed interest in removing the family requirement. This would help to address other issues, i.e. affordable housing, aging in place, etc.

Mr. Kelso expressed concern over removing the public's ability to comment however, indicated that this was a good step forward.

Ms. Goldstein said that a presentation was made to the Board who authorized advertisement of the ordinance. A public hearing will be held in June.

There was a discussion over potential loopholes the ordinance presents or work arounds for separate structures that are not addressed.

Ms. Hendrixson said that properties have limitations that would prevent such issues in most cases. She too indicated that this was a good step.

Mr. Wood added that the Board is interested in the idea of a separate dwelling and removing the family requirement. There are more discussions needed, but this would be a good first step.

It was agreed that this is a good step forward.

Mr. Kracht made a motion to recommend adopting the ordinance as drafted. Mr. Kelso seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

### **Adjournment**

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kaitlyn Finley  
Office Manager, Code Enforcement