

LOWER PAXTON TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
March 6, 2013

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Fredrick Lighty
Ernest Gingrich
Roy Newsome
Dennis Guise
Douglas Grove
Robin Lindsey

ALSO PRESENT

Dianne Moran, Planning & Zoning Officer
Steve Fleming, Township Engineer, HRG Inc.
Tim Smith, Dauphin County Planning Commission

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Lighty called the regular meeting of the Lower Paxton Township Planning Commission to order at 7:00 pm, on the above date in Room 171 of the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Center, 425 Prince Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Mr. Gingrich led the recitation of the Pledge.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

No action was taken on minutes.

OLD BUSINESS

Final Subdivision Plan #12-28
Copperstone Estates

Ms. Moran stated that this plan proposes the development of six single family building lots. The property is zoned AR, Agricultural Residential Zoning District, and is located north of Union Deposit Road and West of Copperstone Road. The property consists of 13.34 acres and lots range from 1.5 acres to 5 acres. The property will be served by private on lot sewage disposal and private on lot water supply.

The applicant has requested waivers of the requirement to submit a preliminary plan; requirement to provide curb and sidewalk, waiver of the requirement to provide financial security; waiver of the requirement to provide existing and natural features a minimum of 100 feet beyond the property's boundary.

The Planning Commission tabled action on this plan at its January 2013 meeting, to allow the applicant time to further address the review comments.

Ms. Moran introduced David Ionni, the developer of the plan, and Tom Wilson of K&W Engineers.

Mr. Wilson explained that the request for a waiver from the financial security requirement is really a request to just post security in a different manner. It might work better to post at the time of the building permit application. This subdivision is not a typical plan because each lot will have its own stormwater management facilities. Mr. Ionni stated he is happy to post the bond, but explained that there are no public improvements or anything that serves the community. Each lot will have its own pond, which means that they cannot be installed in advance. The land will be farmed until the homes are built and sold. The lots are relatively large, and the houses could be located just about anywhere on the lot and that will certainly affect the location of the pond. It could take 7-10 years to build all of these homes because of the price range. He suggested posting the bond at the time he applies for the building permit. This would reduce the financial burden for developing the land, and the Township still gets their assurance of improvements.

Mr. Fleming stated that he understands the concept, but couldn't support it because there is no mechanism to ensure the process is followed through. If there were, he would not have a problem with it.

Mr. Ionni stated this is a small subdivision and he could set the precedent and show one way to reduce expenses to the developer but still give the Township the financial security they need. He asked the Planning Commission if they could support reducing fees just by changing the administrative work involved.

Mr. Fleming noted that there are three forms of financial security: bond, cash escrow and letter of credit. Each would satisfy the requirement. The stormwater ordinance does require financial security for improvements and if there is a way to notate the deeds and plan that future development would require the property owner to post the applicable security to the Township's specifications. That could be an alternative. If stormwater permits were required at the time of the building permit it would require the plan reviewer to reference the subdivision plan, where they would see the note. At this time, a building permit does not require a zoning permit.

Mr. Gingrich asked how to put the procedure into place.

Mr. Wilson stated he could note on the plan that the building permit could not be obtained until the appropriate financial security is in place.

Mr. Lighty asked if neighboring townships have a way to do what is requested. Mr. Smith noted that South Hanover Township allows a note to be placed on the plan, and there are consequences if the work is not done. Mr. Fleming stated the worst case scenario is if it is missed, the enforcement would come after the home is built. Mr. Grove stated it sounds like there is just no way to track this

type of arrangement. Mr. Ionni noted he understands that they don't have it now, but he is hoping to find out what the developers can do differently. Mr. Lighty understands and appreciates the developers' point of view, but there isn't a system to implement the procedures. Mr. Guise would support the idea if there was a way to adequately administer it, assuming it is not inconsistent with the ordinance.

Mr. Fleming noted there is a meeting to discuss the stormwater management ordinance to see about linking the building and zoning departments. Mr. Wilson stated that even if it were missed in the review process, the inspector would see the missing piece during site visits. Mr. Newsome noted that the building department does not cross check zoning issues. He added that building, zoning and stormwater should all be worked out together.

Mr. Newsome stated he would like the intersection corners curbed. He asked if that has been added to the plan. This intersection is spread out and not well defined. Curbing would also direct stormwater to the nearest drain. Mr. Ionni stated the stormwater issue is addressed, and the intersection is a high point of the area. The road is crowned so water does not travel across the road. The main issue is to define the intersection.

With regard to the waiver request to show additional area around the property, Mr. Ionni explained that with even basic aerial photography on the internet it is possible to see as much as you want. This can all be done with no interference with the neighbors or cost associated with surveying property that is not his. He noted that the intent of the ordinance is to see the impact this will have on surrounding properties, and how it relates to surrounding properties. If it is possible to show that without surveying just by using aerial photography, it may be a good compromise. Mr. Wilson added that there is a reduction in stormwater proposed. Mr. Gingrich asked if the extra features can be sketched onto the plan without surveying. Mr. Wilson suggested they could import GIS data from the County and topography information. The Commission was agreeable to that. Mr. Fleming agreed that they can meet the intent of the ordinance. Mr. Wilson and Mr. Fleming agreed that a waiver would not be needed if this information was provided. Mr. Wilson stated he will withdraw that waiver request.

Mr. Wilson stated he has reviewed the comments provided, and can comply with them.

Mr. Tim Smith, Dauphin County Planning Commission, did not have any additional comments. There were also no additional comments from Steve Fleming, HRG.

There were no comments offered from the audience.

Mr. Guise made a motion to recommend approval of the plan, and approval of the waiver requests, subject to compliance with the comments generated by Staff, County and Engineer. Mr. Guise also suggested that the Township look into a way to manage financial security on a per lot basis, so that it is reasonable and cost effective. Ms. Lindsey seconded the motion, and a unanimous vote followed.

NEW BUSINESS

Shadebrook Presentation

Mr. Jeffrey Staub explained that they are working on a revised Master Plan. DEP had to review the plan for permits, and they would not approve it without radical changes to the plan. Permits are necessary for wetlands and other environmentally sensitive features on the site. Because of the impending denial of the DEP permits, or vast changes in order to obtain approval, it was decided to revise the Master Plan and work with the Township Board of Supervisors and Staff.

There were four major issues that had to be addressed: DEP; leaving the existing roads intact; reducing infrastructure; and reducing density.

In order to avoid DEP issues, the development has to be designed so as to not directly affect wetlands. Because they must avoid environmentally sensitive areas, the roadways will only have minor modifications. The amount of earthwork on the site and infrastructure must be greatly reduced. The density is being reduced from about 318 units to 259 residential units.

One difference in the housing mix is that the revised plan does not include townhouses. It will only have single family detached dwellings (195) or duplexes (64). There will not be a request for a density bonus either. The highest density allowed is 283 units. The total of 259 may be adjusted slightly due to stormwater management planning.

The central commercial area will be maintained between the curves on Fairmont Drive. Mr. Staub discussed the waiver requests and noted they will try to avoid widening the roadways if possible. He and the Commissioners looked at the plans in further detail.

Mr. Staub noted that the revised plan should be ready for the Planning Commission's June meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Lighty asked for comments from the audience on anything not on the agenda. There were none offered.

COMMISSIONER COMMENT

Mr. Lighty asked for comments from the Planning Commission members.

Mr. Newsome explained that the Greenway Committee would like to come to the next Planning Commission meeting to discuss some issues raised in planning for the new Wolfersberger Park in Linglestown. There is an engineer/architect working on the plans, but it has sparked an interest in planning on a broader area, since a 93-acre park will have significant impact on the area

near and around it. When the Township was working on the Comprehensive Plan, there were seven CPUs where there were neighborhood or community meetings that focused on a certain area. The area around Wolfersberger would be similar to a CPU between Piketown Road, Linglestown Road, Mountain Road and I-81.

Mr. Guise stated that the Master Plan Study Committee has an interest in building a main entrance through the Yingst property across from Warren Avenue. The plans so far indicate that baseball and football would stay at Koons Park and Softball and a dog park could be planned for at Wolfersberger Park.

The Planning Commission requested that the proposed plans be shared at the April 3rd meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The next regular Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 3, 2013, at 7:00 pm at the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Center, Room 171.

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm with a unanimous vote.

Respectfully Submitted,



Michelle Hiner
Recording Secretary