

A regular meeting of the **PLANNING COMMISSION** for January 2022 was held tonight via web-conference, Chairman Thomas Cross presiding. Members present were Kia Baker, Thom Cross, Carl Freedman, Mike Hayes, Rhonda Isser, Bill Winneberger and Jesse Smith (alternate). Staff present via web-conference were Henry Sekawungu, Director of Planning and Zoning; Robert Habgood, Assistant to the Director of Planning and Zoning; Roger Phillips, Township Engineer, and Anton Kuhner, Township Traffic Engineer.

Mr. Cross called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. A quorum was present.

1. Reorganization with election of Chair and Vice-Chair.

Mr. Winneberger made a motion to recommend Thom Cross for Chair. Ms. Baker seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Cross made a motion to recommend Bill Winneberger for Vice-Chair. Mr. Freedman seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Mr. Cross motioned to recommend approval of the December 20, 2021 minutes. Mr. Winneberger seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Due to a conflict related to the subdivision application CTDA #21-06 for 222 Church Road, Mr. Cross recused himself and turned the meeting over to Mr. Winneberger, the Vice -Chair.

3. CTDA #21-06 – Subdivision for 222 Church Road, Elkins Park, PA 19027, for the proposed subdivision of the existing parcel into ten (10) lots, with eight (8) lots for new residential dwellings, one (1) lot for the existing residential dwelling which is to remain and with the final lot to be dedicated to the Township as open space.

Mr. Habgood provided background on the proposed subdivision plan.

Ms. Christen Pionzio, Esquire, along with Mr. Steven Kline, Architect and Robert Blue, Civil Engineer, were present for the applicant. Ms. Pionzio provided additional background on the proposed subdivision and highlighted that it was a by-right plan, in that no zoning variances were being sought, but that they would be seeking one (1) waiver for the required existing features plan which extended off their property. Ms. Pionzio advised that the applicant met with over 90 residents as part of a planned zoom meeting on January 11, 2022, and shared the main concerns that were an outcome of that meeting, which included traffic, Stormwater Management (SWM) and the loss of the wooded area that were home to nature habitat including flora and fauna.

Ms. Pionzio reviewed the following items with respect to the proposed plan.

- The proposed Lot #5 would use the existing curb cut on Church Road as its driveway access, while the remaining lots would take access off of Harrison Avenue.
- That the proposed lots sizes are in similar comparison to the existing lots in the area.
- That approximately 1.5 acres of the property will be dedicated to the Township as open space to be included as part of the Tookany Creek Trail system.
- The proposed landscaping for the subdivision.
- That no Traffic Impact Study is required.
- That the applicant will not due any fee-in-lieu of.
- That the applicant will comply with all of the review comments from the Township Engineer, Township's Traffic Engineer, County review letter and the staff review letter.

Discussion ensued with respect to the following:

- A possible emergency access to the proposed cul-de-sac from Church Road.
- Sewer Planning Module that would need to be approved by Aqua.
- A connection from the cul-de-sac to the Tookany Creek trail.

- The floodplain and elevation of the proposed SWM.
- The type of single-family detached dwellings, which maybe within the area of 3,500 to 4,000 square feet in size.
- The possible reduction on the number of new lots to have less new impervious surface.
- The proposed landscaping around the retention basin to make it look more natural.
- The proposed waiver for submitting an aerial of the surrounding area.
- That the applicant will not install any traffic light and/or stump bumps only Church Road.

Ms. Pionzio advised that the applicant's plan is only a preliminary plan and would need to come back for a final plan approval.

Mr. Roger Phillips advised that there would be multiple revisions and reviews on the submitted plans, to ensure compliance with the Township codes that were in place.

Mr. Anton Kuhner reviewed the Township's Traffic Engineer letter and confirmed that the proposed subdivision did not meet the requirements for a Traffic Impact Study. Additionally, all revised plans would be reviewed for compliance, including the possible emergency access lane from Church Road to the cul-de-sac that was recommended for the applicant to consider looking into.

Ms. Julia Slavet, Tookany/Tacony –Frankford Watershed Partnership, was present and summarized their review of the proposed plan as follows:

- They would like to see a list of the replacement trees and that some of the proposed trees did not appear to be native species.
- The details of the landscape materials.
- Consider cutting back on the amount of pavement by reducing the size of the cul-de-sac.
- Add more BMP's and Storm Water Management (SWM) systems, while spreading them throughout the development, as opposed to having one large basin.
- Maintenance of the SWM.

A resident at 216 E. Church Road was represented by counsel, who had concerns about the lights from vehicles coming down Harrison Avenue towards the cul-du-sac, and the impact of those headlights on their quality of life, and the consideration of a buffer to prevent this. Ms. Pionzio advised that the applicant would install landscaping as required by the Township Code. Mr. Hayes commented that the Planning Commission could put a condition in, to require additional buffering.

Numerous residents were present and expressed the following concerns:

- That a petition, against the proposed subdivision, had over 170 signatures listing concerns with respect to traffic, SWM and noise.
- That a new access to the cul-de-sac should be require off of Church Road, which would have a larger traffic impact.
- How the existing wildlife in the area would be protected.
- Accuracy of the submitted plan.
- Flood management due to changes in climate, and that construction should take into consideration energy requirements.
- Whether the proposed property would be taxable.
- The effect of the change in landscaping.
- Lack of disclosure of the proposed subdivision as part of the purchase.

Mr. Freedman made a motion to recommend a preliminary approval with the condition that the applicant complied with all of the outstanding review comments, and a consideration to add more buffering and dispersion of additional trees. Ms. Baker seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. Review of Zoning Hearing Board Agenda for February 14, 2022.

A. Appeal #22-3692, York Road Realty Co., L.P. for 8116 Church Road.

Mr. Habgood provided background on the proposed application for a redevelopment of the existing skating rink into a multi-story self-storage use with some retail. Mr. Cross inquired if this application was previously reviewed. Mr. Habgood advised that a similar application was reviewed in early 2021 but that application was withdrawn. This is a new application submitted by the owner of the property for the same proposed use.

Mr. Michael Yanoff, esquire, was present for the applicant and provided additional background on the proposed use. Mr. Yanoff advised that the one large problem with the property is off-street parking and with the storm loss of the footbridge from Wall Park it has been very difficult finding a use for the property. Mr. Yanoff stated that other than the proposed self-storage use, the only other possible use has been an indoor shooting range.

Discussion ensued with respect to the following:

- Availability of off-street parking.
- Exploration of other uses for the property.

Several residences and the Township Commissioners present expressed concerns to the Planning Commission that there may be other uses that are permitted by Code that may not have been extensively explored and expressed opposition to the proposed self-storage use.

Ms. Baker made a motion to recommend approval with the conditions as noted on the prior review from the February 2021 Planning Commission Meeting. Mr. Winneberger seconded the motion but the motion failed.

Mr. Cross made a motion to recommend no action. Mr. Freedman seconded, and the motion passed 5-2 (Ayes: Cross, Freedman, Hayes, Isser, Smith; Nays: Baker and Winneberger).

5. Old Business - None

6. New Business

- A. Mr. Habgood reviewed the 2021 P.C. Annual Summary Report.
- B. Mr. Cross requested a way of determining what the outcome was for ZHB decisions. Staff made a recommendation that they would be adding the ZHB decisions as part of new business.

5. Adjournment- Mr. Cross motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:58p.m., seconded by Mr. Freedman.



Robert Zienkowski
Township Manager

Submitted by Robert J. Habgood