

UPPER MAKEFIELD TWP. PLANNING COMMISSION

February 23, 2011 – 7:00 p.m. Meeting

Municipal Complex, 1076 Eagle Road.

Present: Walt Wydro, Chair; Karin Traina, Vice Chair; Bob Curtin, Greg Pitonak, Hank Lieberman, Kathleen Pisauro, Ken Rubin, Dave Kuhns, Director, Planning & Zoning, Mary Ryan, Liaison, Larry Young, Township Engineer.

I. Public Comment: No members of the public were present to comment.

II. Approval of Minutes: Ms. Traina made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 22, 2010 meeting. Mr. Rubin seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

III. Liaison Report: Ms. Ryan was present to provide the liaison report. Ms. Ryan stated that it has been a quiet first few months. The Supervisors have entered into casual talks with Newtown Township regarding possible regionalization or consolidation of the Police Force as a cost savings measure. Presently the Board is keeping all options open.

Mr. Kulig has re-joined the Board of Supervisors to complete the term which will end in January of 2012. Therefore, she stated that at the end of this year, we will have three open positions for Supervisor.

IV. Planning Commission 2011 Reorganization: Mr. Rubin made a motion for Mr. Wydro to continue as Chairman of the Planning Commission. Mr. Curtin seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Ms. Pisauro made a motion to have Karin Traina continue in her capacity as Vice Chair. Mr. Pitonak seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

V. DEVELOPMENT ISSUES:

A. Washington Crossing Inn; Sketch Plan: Ed Murphy, Esq. was present on behalf of the Applicant. Mr. Murphy provided some background. The current ownership group purchased the Inn in May of 2009. Shortly after the purchase, there was a meeting held to discuss, in general, the plans to improve the Inn. As the Township did not want to see piecemeal or incremental improvements, an overall master plan was developed to provide the “big vision” for the future and this is being presented in the form of a Sketch Plan.

The only time in the intervening months that the Applicant has appeared before the Township was the meeting in May of 2010 before the Zoning Hearing Board which granted the Applicant relief to add approximately 460 square feet of a dry preparation room adjacent to the kitchen.

So far, the Applicant has heard from the Bucks County Conservation District and has received a letter from Larry Young of Gilmore & Associates. Mr. Young's letter provides comments many of which are reminders of items which need to be addressed when the plan moves forward to the preliminary land development stage.

John Vogel, also representing the Applicant, provided an overview of what exists today including the layout of the Inn, current parking facilities, the use of a temporary tent, the location of the kitchen, the dining and bar areas, areas of egress and the layout of the second floor. The outbuildings on the property and the wells and septic systems were also discussed.

The proposed addition would eliminate the need for the tent. A new more accessible entrance is proposed along with the renovation of the second floor and expansion of the banquet facilities, addition of bathrooms and the conversion of second floor offices to guest quarters as well as the addition of an elevator. These proposals will require relief from the Zoning Hearing Board.

Regarding parking, the Inn has leased parking facilities from the Washington Crossing Historic Park and will be providing valet services to those areas. Some of the outbuildings will be eliminated, a new well is proposed and the intention is to fully sprinkler the facility.

The main concerns expressed by members of the Planning Commission were the possible problems with respect to the valet parking, drilling of a new well, the proposed tie in to the sewer plant of the Park and how the Inn will appear visually following the improvements. The Applicant and representatives have had meetings with the State and report that the State was supportive and amenable to the proposition of tying into the sewer system of the Park.

Although the Applicant is presenting an overall plan, it is anticipated that the project will be completed in phases.

B. Alden Planning Module, 2840 Windybush Road: Mr. Wydro stated that according to the review letter from CKS Engineers, this Planning Module is complete and ready to be signed following consideration by the Board of Supervisors. With no questions by the members of the Planning Commission, Mr. Rubin made a motion to recommend approval to the Board of Supervisors. Ms. Traina seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

C. Cohen Planning Module; 384 Woodhill Road: Mr. Kuhns explained that this Planning Module is in connection with the one lot subdivision which was approved some time ago. The Township has received a letter from Gilmore & Associates recommending approval and completion of the checklist and forwarding to DEP for review. Mr. Young interjected that the Applicant was under a Rural Residence Agreement and was required to build a system for her existing residence prior to starting the planning process and that

is the reason for the “lag time” from when subdivision approval was received and the consideration of the Planning Module.

Mr. Rubin questioned why, regarding both Planning Modules being considered this evening that the Applicant’s signatures are so old. In the case of the Alden Planning Module, the signature is approximately five years old and with respect to the Cohen Planning Module, the signature is approximately two years old. Mr. Kuhns explained that the signature was obtained when the planning process began. He asked the Planning Commission members if they would like to put this issue on a future agenda for the Planning Commission. Mr. Wydro wondered if that was necessary. Ms. Traina suggested that the Township obtain a written opinion from Ms. Eberle. Mr. Kuhns agreed to request that from Ms. Eberle.

Following discussion, Mr. Pitonak made a motion to recommend approval of the Planning Module. Mr. Curtin seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

VI. CURRENT AND NEW BUSINESS:

A. Township Sign Ordinances, Cont. from December 22, 2010 meeting:

Mr. Wydro began by stating that the question to be considered is should the document be an ordinance or a guideline and that the way it’s currently written is as a set of guidelines. Mr. Rubin stated that he disagreed referencing Ordinance 2007-275 establishing design standards for signs and which very clearly states that the “Board of Supervisors enacts this ordinance.” Therefore, he said he considered this a mandatory ordinance. Mr. Curtin agreed. Ms. Traina asked then if the ordinance gives the Planning Commission the right to *not* recommend approval of something that doesn’t adhere to the sign guide. He responded that is the way he interprets it and Ms. Ryan interjected that her interpretation is the same. As the Ordinance incorporates the guide, there may not be any need for any changes. Following discussion, the consensus of the group was that nothing should be changed, that the guideline can be enforced as mandatory due to the ordinance but that the guide should remain as subjective as possible for purposes of allowing the Planning Commission latitude in approving signs. The Township will e-mail all members copies of the Sign Guide. There was also discussion regarding why the Wells Fargo Sign Applicant did not return to the Planning Commission for final consideration.

Bucks County Well Regulations: Mr. Wydro stated that the County has issued new well regulations effective January 1, 2011 which contradict some of the things in Chapter 26 of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO). Ms. Ryan stated that CKS is currently reviewing them, on behalf of the Township, so she suggested the Planning Commission may want to wait for the letter from CKS which will be in the Planning Commission packets for the next agenda.

Following the discussion of the agenda items, Mr. Rubin asked Mr. Kuhns when the governing body feels it appropriate to have Mary Eberle attend the meetings and suggested that she attend when the Planning Commission is acting upon a significant

issue. Mr. Kuhns stated that Ms. Eberle will be notified to attend when the Planning Commission is considering formal applications for land development or when the it is considering an ordinance.

Mr. Wydro stated that he felt the Planning Commission should have the opportunity to make recommendations to the Zoning Hearing Board prior to the Zoning Hearing Board meetings. Several years ago, the Planning Commission was given the opportunity to make recommendations to the board regarding Zoning Hearing Board issues. Mr. Kuhns stated that this is the procedure in many other area Townships and he will be raising this issue at the upcoming staff meeting.

The Meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by: Phyllis Mehler

Approved: March 23, 2011