

MINUTES OF TOWNSHIP OF PINE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Monday, April 13, 2015

Pine Community Center

This session of the Township of Pine Planning Commission was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Michael Hansen, Chair.

Members in attendance were: Michael Hansen, Chair; Joel Dennison, Vice-Chair; Garrin Welter; Jeffrey McGeary; John Lombardo; and Renee Evans. Also present were Larry Kurpakus, Director of Code Administration and Land Development; and Dave Kovac, Lennon, Smith, Souleret Engineering, Inc. (LSSE).

There were 10 visitors present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Hansen explained that the Planning Commission is a recommending body and all approvals must be received from the Board of Supervisors.

MINUTES

Motion was made by Mr. Welter and seconded by Mr. Lombardo to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2015 Planning Commission meeting. The aye vote on the motion was unanimous with the exception of Mr. Dennison and Mrs. Evans who abstained as they were not in attendance at that meeting. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Mr. Lombardo and seconded by Mr. McGeary to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2015 Planning Commission meeting. The aye vote on the motion was unanimous with the exception of Mr. Hansen, Mr. Welter and Mrs. Evans who abstained as they were not in attendance at that meeting. Motion carried.

SPIRIT OF PINE CONDITIONAL USE AND SUBDIVISION

Mr. Kurpakus reported that FWH Development, LLC is proposing to develop 5 single family lots and 58 new townhome units on 37.8 acres in the B-1/R-2 Zoning District. The single family lots will be accessed from an extension of English Farm Drive and the construction of a new cul-de-sac. The townhomes will be accessed from a new residential street connection on Graham and Wallace Roads. Stormwater management, landscaping and pedestrian improvements are included with the plan. There are numerous outstanding items remaining to be address from the LSSE review letter dated April 10, 2015.

Mr. Kurpakus added that the application includes five written waiver requests summarized in the developer's narrative. These include grading the slopes at 2:1; utilizing blasting not meeting the minimum setbacks; alternate sidewalk construction; payment in lieu of parks and recreation; and grading within 50' of a wetland. In addition, the applicant is proposing to develop the site utilizing blasting. Section 48-17 of the Township Code specifies that blasting may be utilized only under extraordinary site conditions where conventional excavation cannot be used and only with Board of Supervisor approval.

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Chris Wulff of Larson Design Group, the applicant engineer, added that they plan to build townhouses since it is a conditional use in the B-1 zoning district. Also the landscape plan will be updated when they receive the final tree counts from the EAC. The waiver for slopes has been revised to 2.5 slopes, development will stay 50 feet from utility poles, and they request payment in lieu of for open spaces and sidewalks. Per PennDOT the posted speed limit on Graham Road does not allow them to install a crosswalk mid-block to reach the existing trail, therefore they are requesting payment in lieu.

Mr. McGeary commented that he is concerned with the severe grading, and they may have to come back with a revised plan.

Mr. Dennison stated that the plan for sidewalks had been based on having a crosswalk to Graham Road. Since there will not be sidewalks along Wallace and Graham Roads as required by Code, payment in lieu should be for the entire frontage.

Mr. Welter added that there is still a lot to do; sidewalks, grading, and a stormwater plan. If the development is approved when will construction start, and how much the units will cost? Mr. Wulff replied that the price of the units will be similar to the price of the townhouses in the Village at Pine. Completion of earthwork is anticipated in 2016, and units will follow.

Mr. Hansen asked that since PennDOT will not allow a crosswalk, does the developer have any plans to allow safe crossing. Mr. Wulff replied not without stopping traffic on Graham Road, the only way to cross would be a bridge, or to drop the speed limit on the road.

Mr. Hansen stated that NPDES permit needs to be obtained and it will be difficult to move forward without it. He reminded Mr. Wulff that the plan shows development within 50 feet of a wetland, and no waivers have been given in the past.

Mr. Welter asked where the exit/entrance onto Graham Road will be and commented that an exit onto an incline would make sight distance difficult.

David Lucci of Victor-Wetzel Associates questioned the connectivity of the development. He is concerned about the connections on the sides of the development, and asked why connectivity is not part of this development. Mr. Kurpakus replied that the location of the townhomes and single family lots do not require connectivity. Mr. Lucci replied that the single family part of development requires connectivity, and isn't there a sign that says that there will be connected roads. Hasn't the township set precedence with a plan of theirs previously?

Mr. Dennison replied that if four single family lots are combined with English Farms there will be less than 50 lots in the development, and connectivity is not required. The prior development that Mr. Lucci is referring to has more than 50 lots, therefore connectivity was necessary.

Mr. Kurpakus informed Mr. Lucci that the letter from Victor-Wetzel Associates stating their concerns for connectivity has been made part of the planning commission's packet.

Mr. Dennison asked Mr. Kurpakus if the road right-of-way dedication shown on the plan is correct. Mr. Kurpakus replied that it will complete the necessary right-of-way for future development.

Fred Hespenheide of FWH Development, LLC, the applicant, suggested that since there is not a lot of room along Wallace Road and it is a very busy road, could sidewalks be built somewhere else or a fee in lieu of be paid. Mr. Hansen replied that they will consider fee in lieu payment.

Motion was made by Mr. Dennison and seconded by Mr. Welter to table to the Spirit at Pine conditional use approval. The aye vote on the motion was unanimous. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Mr. Dennison and seconded by Mr. McGeary to table the Spirit at Pine Land Development. The aye vote on the motion was unanimous. Motion carried.

SWINDERMAN ROAD SKETCH PLAN

Mr. Kurpakus reported that Eddy Land Company, Inc. is requesting Planning Commission discussion on a proposed residential development in the C-2 zoning district located off of Swinderman Road near the Knights of Columbus property. Township Code has specific requirements for patio and/or carriage homes and the developer is requesting general discussion on the concepts he is exploring.

John Schleicher of Gibson-Thomas Engineering Co., Inc. the applicant engineer stated that the proposed development is on 11.7 acres located north of the Knights of Columbus property on Swinderman Road. The site was previously approved for the development of Best Tile. Since it is located in the C-2 district, Mr. Schleicher believes that it would be a good transition from Route 19 to Tanglewood. Although the developer's preference is a patio home development, conversations with Township staff, have led to some ambiguity as to the permitted use of patio homes. He would like to discuss conditional use criteria, and building carriage homes vs patio homes. The density and open space requirements are the same for both. The difference is that the patio home garage doors cannot face the street; there may be design issues and challenges. For example two carriage home units could be joined together with the front garage entrances, but people prefer detached units.

Mr. Welter stated that he does not have strong feelings one way or the other. His initial thought is that the location of the development makes it kind of contained. A passerby will not be looking into a garage if patio homes are built, but carriage homes may be more appealing and may be less expensive to build. He questioned the wetland placement on the plan. Mr. Schleicher replied that widest part of the wetlands is on the Knights of Columbus property. His company made a good delineation a couple of years ago for the Best Tile project.

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Mr. Dennison asked if there was a marketing reason to explain why there is only one type of unit. Mr. Schleicher replied that the type of units could be combined. Mr. Kurpakus added that it would meet Code, as the density is the same.

Mr. Dennison suggested that the units with front entries could be put together to meet the Code. Mr. Schleicher replied that Mr. Dennison's suggestion is acceptable.

Mr. Lombardo added that having 8 attached units in the mix would make the development more attractive. Mrs. Evans agreed with Mr. Dennison and Mr. Lombardo. Mr. Hansen added that variety is good, and it will be better to have both styles. Mr. Welter asked what the price difference between the units would be. Mr. Moritz replied that they would be priced similarly.

Mr. Schleicher asked if a permit will be needed to cross the wetlands. Mr. Hansen replied that a permit will be necessary since they will be disturbing the wetlands.

Mr. Schleicher asked if Code will allow them to combine the two products. Mr. Kurpakus replied that he will confirm that they will be able to meet Code. Mr. Schleicher added that there are no patio home developments in township; and it is an excellent idea to combine products.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Mr. Welter and seconded by Mr. Lombardo to adjourn the meeting. The aye vote on the motion was unanimous. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.