

**Planning Commission
Minutes
August 3, 2015
7:30 PM**

Present:

Brett MacKay
Patricia Younce
Joseph Vavra
Josephine Charnock

Absent:

Nancy Becker
John Vickers
Rich Marino

Staff:

Carolyn McKelvie, Asst. Zoning & Planning Officer
Mary Stover, Township Engineer

Opening Comments

Mr. MacKay noted that lacking a quorum, the Planning Commission will discuss any new business but will not be able to take any action.

Minutes

Due to the lack of a quorum, approval of the June 1, 2015 minutes and the July 6, 2015 minutes were tabled until the next meeting on Monday, September 14, 2015.

New Business

North Penn Animal Hospital

Waiver Request was tabled until the next meeting on Monday, September 14, 2015, due to lack of a quorum. (The applicant was not in attendance.)

Mr. Vavra requested Supervisor Laura Smith for the Board of Supervisors to appoint two more members to fill existing vacancies. This is the third or fourth time the Planning Commission did not have enough members to make a quorum. Ms. Younce stated she would like an email sent to Rob Ford if a member will not be able to attend. Mr. MacKay stated that he would send an email to all members, Mr. Ford and Supervisor Laura Smith noting this request. Supervisor Laura Smith stated she will let the other Supervisors know this is needed and she agrees the issue needs to be addressed.

Windmills and Wind Energy

Ms. Stover presented Windmills & Wind Energy with samples that she gave out to the Planning Commission members. Roof top windmills that Ms. Younce had brought to the attention of the Planning Commission were discussed. Ms. Stover stated they could use language that the ordinance allows only free standing poles as opposed to roof top. There was discussion of model ordinances where they came from and when they were created. Mr. Vavra stated we should allow different types of wind energy devices since they are making them so efficient and smaller. Ms. Younce wants to make sure all types of windmills are covered and make sure they are not an eye sore. Ms. Stover stated there are requirements for safety, height, distance and possible fencing. There was discussion of limiting one windmill per roof and minimum lot area. Ms. Younce would like to legislate it so it is acceptable to neighbors. Ms. Stover also brought up the constant rotation and light coming through the windmills called shadow flicker.

Mr. MacKay asked how the Planning Commission wanted to proceed. Ms. Stover suggested deciding on height, lot size and research sizes of the windmills by possibly contacting a manufacturer. Mr. Vavra asked Ms. Stover which ordinance sample she liked. She stated Hilltown and New Britain Townships had the more current requirements. It was discussed that the PSATS model ordinance was older. Ms. Stover suggested we pick and choose and pull out of each one for what we want. Ms. Younce asked if any municipalities in Chester County have one since that area seems to be progressive with regard to new energy sources. Mr. MacKay suggested Willistown Township and Ms. Stover stated she will check into it. Ms. Younce suggested we check with a dealer and ask what the trend is.

Discussion was made of seeing the different types of windmills on a site visit.

Mr. Vavra suggested the following be addressed. Maximum allowed, Maximum height, Minimum distance from edge of fan blades to the ground.

Ms. Younce asked Ms. Stover to look at the Hilltown Township Windmill that has been installed.

Mr. Vavra asked if any township that Ms. Stover often goes to for the most up to date requirements. Ms. Stover stated that there was not one specific township for all issues.

Ms. Younce asked Supervisor Smith about PSATS.

Ms. Stover stated she has the 2007 & 2009 draft ordinances from PSATS.

Ms. Stover will contact manufacturers to obtain information about height and typical requirements. Ms. Stover will compose a draft ordinance for review by the Planning Commission.

RV Ordinance

Mr. MacKay introduced the next agenda item and stated that the Planning Commission had a draft RV ordinance in the packets.

Mr. Vavra stated he would like the front of the RV's flush with the front of the house.

The Planning Commission asked what the Ordinance currently requires and Ms. Stover explained the current Ordinance.

Mr. Vavra stated that the Ordinance needs to state the distance from the property line as well as stating it should be flush with the front of the house.

Mr. Mackay stated that the word "parking" and the word "storing" will need to be defined

Ms. Litavic (who was present as a township resident) spoke regarding side yard setback and length of time for housekeeping/use of RV parked on the property.

Ms. Younce and Mr. Vavra asked if existing RV's will be "grandfathered" as this may not cause all RV's to comply after the Ordinance change if they are "grandfathered".

Ms. Litavic stated, in her situation, the property owner is not the owner of the RV. The owner's grown children live with them and it is their RV.

There were discussions regarding maintenance, cleaning, storage and loading, time frames and use of generators. It was suggested that the word "housekeeping" be removed from the ordinance.

Ms. Stover was asked to incorporate the comments from the Planning Commission and return next month with a new draft. Planning Commission members asked that the ordinance prohibit storage by non-resident/owner, as in the situation brought up by Ms. Litavic.

Old Business

Buffer Requirements for Commercial Areas and Parking Lots

Mr. MacKay introduced the next agenda item. Ms. Stover reviewed suggested revisions to the buffering requirements for commercial areas and parking lots.

Section 1 includes language regarding a mix of buffering for parking lots. Ms. Stover explained the requirements.

The Planning Commission reviewed the other sections and Table 1 for the addition of type C buffers for commercial. Ms. Stover went over the ones that were changed to provide heavier buffering.

Ms. Younce liked what Chuck Wilson stated about different heights of plants.

Ms. Stover stated the proposed language would require different types of vegetation.

Mr. MacKay asked about a maintenance program and Ms. Stover said the solicitor stated we can't require an escrow or lien the property. Mr. MacKay stated that he was thinking about the plants that are dying and that they should be required to maintain them, especially buffering and screening plantings, in perpetuity.

Ms. Younce asked about the length of time we have to make them replace them and Ms. Stover stated up to 2 years in the Land Development requirements. Ms. Younce replied that these plants die and are not being replaced.

There was a discussion between the Planning Commission members regarding how long an approved plan is required to maintain the plants. Ms. Younce and Mr. Mackay would like wording to include maintenance of buffers in parking sections and property line buffer section.

It was suggested that we ask Mr. Dooley about the language.

Sign Ordinance

Mr. MacKay introduced the next agenda item which is an overall review of the Township Sign regulations.

Ms. Stover presented information regarding the Township sign ordinances following the presentation from the County last month. Mrs. Younce discussed the signs she had seen in Harleysville which were attractive and appeared to make almost a downtown area.

Mr. Vavra observed different areas and signs. He would like to figure out what the plan is for reviewing this and not restrict businesses too much. Ms. Stover agreed.

Ms. Charnock suggested working with the Economic Development Committee.

Supervisor Smith mentioned an example of the Indian Restaurant which is so restricted in terms of area on the free standing shopping center sign and limits them to hardly any signage. However, Mr. Vavra said the Indian Restaurant does have a large wall sign facing Allentown Road.

Ms. Younce mentioned the Coffeehead sign issue at Univest wherein the owner (Univest) took the bulk of available sign area and left little for tenants who blamed the township.

There was a discussion regarding electronic signs and group signs, including time frames, brightness and billboards.

Ms. Stover asked where does the Planning Commission want to start. Mr. Vavra suggested starting with prohibited signs.

Ms. Stover had provided a list of the current prohibited signs compared to the MCPC Model Ordinance. Ms. Younce suggested starting with zoning districts. Ms. Stover also provided information about generic regulation for signs.

Ms. Younce is interested in reviewing other Townships including certain areas such as Radnor, which appears to be very restricted for signage and neighboring municipalities. She mentioned an example of the Village of Wayne which has nicer signs. (example: McDonalds in Freeport, Maine)

Ms. Stover stated we can have different requirements in the Village area vs. Industrial Area.

Mr. Vavra mentioned if there are too many signs, it is too busy and it is distracting to drivers.

The Planning Commission decided to start the review by district with Residential first. Ms. Stover will prepare a comparison chart of the Residential District.

Additional Business

Mr. MacKay asked if any additional business. Hearing none, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Carolyn McKelvie
Asst. Zoning & Planning Officer

CM/dh