

MINUTES OF THE
EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING HELD ON NOVEMBER 20, 2019
(Approved December 18, 2019)

The Planning Commission held their monthly meeting on Wednesday, November 20, 2019. Present for the meeting were Walter Woessner, Kathryn Alexis, Lance Parson, Larry Tietjen and Paul Lacon. Also present was Marjorie Brown, Township Solicitor.

Mr. Woessner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and the pledge was recited.

Mr. Parson made a motion to accept the Agenda for November 20, 2019. Mrs. Alexis seconded the motion. The motion carried with a 5-0-0 vote.

MINUTES

Mrs. Alexis made a motion to accept the minutes for the September 18, 2019 monthly meeting. Mr. Tietjen seconded the motion. The motion carried with a 5-0-0 vote.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT

There was no subdivision and land development brought before the commission at this time.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS BROUGHT BEFORE THE COMMISSION

Review Ordinance “Amendment re: Vehicle Auctions”

Ms. Brown stated the Board of Supervisors wanted clarification as to where it would make sense to have the types of uses for vehicle auctions. She stated this Amendment establishes that Vehicle Auctions, by right, can take place in the LI (Limited Industrial) District. Under the current zoning ordinance there is no place that specifically identifies the zoning district for vehicle auctions. She also stated this is limited to vehicles auctions, not equipment. Mr. Woessner asked if there is somewhere else in the region that allows vehicle auctions then can we not allow it at all. Ms. Brown stated she would have to research that issue. The Amendment also clarifies that auto sales and servicing, by right, is allowed in the C-1 District, but the sales and servicing has to be retail, and no auctions are allowed. Mrs. Alexis made a motion to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve the Amendment re: Vehicle Auctions. Mr. Woessner seconded the motion. The motion carried with a 5-0-0 vote.

Review of Ordinance “Amendment to Wireless Communications Facilities Ordinance”

Ms. Brown stated in regards to constructing a new cell tower, the requirement is to go through the land development process which has a mechanism in place for recovery of consultant fees. However, there are applications that come in for modifications to existing cell towers. There have been instances where the Township has been stuck with paying the consultant fees because the Ordinance doesn't specifically say the Applicant must pay the consultant fees. This Amendment states that to make modifications to existing cell towers the applicant must sign a professional services agreement and all consultant fees must be paid before the permit is issued. A discussion ensued. Mr. Parson made a motion to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve the Amendment to Wireless Communications Facilities Ordinance. Mrs. Alexis seconded the motion. The motion carried with a 5-0-0 vote.

Natural Lands Trust Assessment of Cluster Development Provisions of Zoning Ordinance

Ann Hutchinson from Natural Lands Trust gave a presentation on the Assessment of Cluster Development Provisions of Zoning Ordinance. Ann stated her understanding was that the question was asked, “why doesn’t anyone use the Township’s cluster ordinance”. She’s going to talk about why a developer might not be using the cluster ordinance and do we want to do something differently to protect ourselves in the FR and other residential zoning districts should a developer come in with a subdivision plan. Ann stated from her prospective she feels the Township is already doing a great job trying to protect as much land as we can by expanding our parks and trails. She stated that right now the cluster ordinance applies to R-2 and R-3 Districts to properties that are 20 acres or more and basically developers are not using the cluster ordinance because there isn’t any tract left to develop. She stated in regards to open space it should be considered to be land that can’t be built on which is flooded, wet and steep and 50% of the net tract area. Some recommendations from Natural Lands are to update the cluster section of the ordinance, suggest having site visits when applications come in, preserve land that can’t be developed, and encourage developers to have same number of homes but on smaller lots. Ann stated a couple things the Planning Commission should consider are: What do you want the future of the FR District to be, are you happy with the 2 acre lots you have now or do you want other options available; and do you want to take the time to update and modernize some of the cluster standards. Ann stated the greatest risk in the Township is the FR District and suggested to look at how much of the FR District is preserved under Agricultural Easement or is public land and anything that isn’t is at risk for subdivision. Open space should be a percentage of the good buildable ground plus the stuff you can’t run a bulldozer over cause it’s wet and steep. Ann stated at the very least they should change the open space formula, it should be 50% of the net tract area plus all constrained land. A discussion ensued. Mr. Tietjen and Mr. Parson are on the Open Space Committee and feel that committee should be consulted on the open space issue. They would also like to have Mrs. Nocella come to the next Planning Commission meeting since she is working with some property owners in the FR District.

Northern Federation Update

Nothing to report at this time.

Historical Commission Update

Mr. Tietjen stated the Historical Commission received the same presentation regarding the Rehabilitation of Building 19, Frick’s Lock Village.

Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee

Nothing to report at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Alexis moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 pm. Mr. Tietjen seconded the motion. The motion carried with a 5-0-0 vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Kutsch
Secretary