

**MINUTES OF THE
EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2017 AT 7:00 P.M.**

Call Meeting to Order and Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Walt Woessner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the following Planning Commission members in attendance: Kathryn Alexis, Lance Parson, Lawrence Tietjen, and Paul Lacon. Also in attendance was Planning Commission Solicitor, Ms. Marjorie Brown; Mr. Brady Flaharty, Township Engineer, and Mr. Rick Tralies, Planning Consultant with Natural Lands. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

1. Minutes.

Chairman Woessner called for a vote to approve the minutes of the August 18, 2017 monthly meeting. Kathryn Alexis motioned to approve the minutes as written. Lawrence Tietjen seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0-1 with Lance Parson abstaining. Ms. Brown offered clarification to a question brought up in the last paragraph on page 3 of the August 16, 2017 minutes regarding subdivision plan submittals. She explained a sketch plan is an informal proposal submitted for review/comment and would be subject to any code changes made prior to submission of a preliminary subdivision application.

2. Citizen Comments.

There were no citizen comments to come before the board.

3. Subdivision and Land Development Project Review – The Enclave at Ellis Woods.

Chairman Woessner opened the floor to review and discussion of the second preliminary subdivision and land development plan for The Enclave at Ellis Woods.

Wendy Manley introduced herself and husband, Tim, as project developers. She delivered 14 copies of their amended PA DEPS sewer facilities planning module application as requested.

Prior to the start of plan review discussion, Ms. Manley sought clarification on the correct version of the zoning and land development code book applicable to their development. She cited a comment Ms. Brown had written that referenced an ordinance they (the Manleys) could not locate in their version of the codes book. A brief comparison occurred between Ms. Brown and Ms. Manley's code books. It was determined the correct code version dated 2004 was the one to use. Ms. Brown suggested perhaps the Manleys did not possess a codified version. It was noted a complete version is available in the office for purchase. Ms. Manley stated, moving forward, if she encountered any other discrepancies she would reach out first before proceeding.

The following are a listing of comments generated and items that were brought up for discussion:

- Chairman Woessner asked for a note on subsequent plans indicating which zoning and SALDO version was used in its preparation.
- Ms. Manley provided commission members with an updated Wetlands Delineation report conducted by VonNieda Environmental in 2017, she noted their findings were in agreement with a previous report issued in 2005/2006. No wetlands were identified on the property.

- Ms. Manley asked if a water tie-in to their lot was required in addition to the sewer tie-in. She was informed just the sewer tie-in is mandatory. Ms. Manley also informed the commission that their neighbors, the Schracks, are presently on public sewer.
- Ms. Manley asked for the timeline for payment of various fees due (upon plan approval), in case they should decide to sell to another developer. Ms. Brown stated the requirement to record from final plan approval is typically 90 days unless a waiver (or extension) is requested and granted. She stated from preliminary to final plan approval stage the applicant has time to iron out details and oftentimes a year or so may elapse. Generally, under the MCP, the preliminary plan approval is not bound by subsequent code changes for a 5-year period.
- Ms. Manley brought up the following issues which she stated are of great emotional significance to her and her husband. She cited they have expended much time and money on their home in their efforts to retain its historic and aesthetic attributes. She felt many of the review recommendations go against maintaining the historical integrity of the property. She questioned how they (as developers) and the Township might meet these challenges together.

Ms. Manley related the Historical Commission recommended the remnants of the stone wall along Ellis Woods Road be preserved. However, the mandated cartway/roadway widths would require them to dismantle and move the wall, move utility poles and an existing swale. Ms. Manley provided commissioners with a hand drawn sketch showing how these required improvements would come extremely close to their front door. She stated another existing stone wall, perpendicular to the one remaining along Ellis Woods, would be impacted as well as existing gardens and a walkway in the front yard. She asked for input on how they may preserve their front yard aesthetics and still meet regulations.

Mr. Woessner asked Commission members to refer to Sheet 5 and a discussion ensued over the required roadway width and placement and whether the improvements would indeed impact the property in the manner as interpreted by the Manleys.

Ms. Manley noted the proposed sidewalk does not connect to anything, it cannot connect to the neighboring subdivision. Mr. Manley remarked he felt the monies required to install 600' of sidewalk would be better served elsewhere such as development of a master plan, or toward maintenance of existing walkways. The Commissioners and Mr. Tralies noted that the creation of a safe, walkable community is important to the Township and it has expended funds and effort to reach that goal in the future.

Ms. Manley informed the commission they are in contact with the Conservation District and have requested their creative input on meeting Stormwater requirements while aesthetically integrating a pond without a fence, perhaps dedicating an entire lot to its construction.

Mr. Lance Parson queried Ms. Manley with a personal question, he asked respectfully, if they as development applicants may be too emotionally tied to the project to achieve compliance with land development regulations. Ms. Manley stated she understood the question, and she stated that is why they are seeking

solutions “outside the box” to achieve their goal to preserve the uniqueness of their property and the proposed subdivision.

Ms. Marjorie Brown noted if the Manleys proposed to construct a pond on a separate lot that would likely require formation of a Homeowners Association. Ms. Brown also noted that the Board of Supervisors need to review and decide on all subdivision proposals in a consistent manner.

Mr. Woessner noted none of these issues would be resolved tonight and the Manleys concurred. Ms. Manley stated she was seeking any ideas or suggestions from the Planning Commission and she reiterated they are seeking guidance from the Conservation District concerning their stormwater retention plan design.

Brief discussion continued on some additional comments that were generated:

- Ms. Manley questioned the required gate installation at emergency access points. Mr. Flaharty referred her to look under public improvements for the recommended installation of collapsible bollards.
- Mr. Flaharty stated he would email Ms. Manley information regarding Comment 52 and the required sanitary sewer details.
- Mr. Titejen, referencing previous comments concerning sidewalk installation, suggested alternative materials such as cobblestone might be used for an historic and more aesthetically pleasing effect. Ms. Brown noted the Township Traffic Engineer, John Yurick had indicated his support of an asphalt walkway as an alternative to a concrete sidewalk in an email to her.
- Ms. Manley informed the commission that their neighbors declined the Manleys offer of the triangular piece of land (designated as a bus stop) because they did not want to accept liability for the bus stop. Ms. Brown stated the triangular piece is currently shown as a standalone, non-conforming lot and would need to be consolidated with another lot in the subdivision. Alternatively, the Manleys could designate it as common space with the formation of an HOA rather than petition the Zoning Hearing Board for creation of a non-conforming lot.
- A brief discussion ensued regarding Homeowners Associations versus Declaration of Covenants as a means to address issues such as the non-conforming lot and the stormwater retention ponds. Mr. Brady recommended the Manleys review sample agreements in the Township’s Stormwater Best Management Practices.
- The Manleys noted Comment 51 had been satisfied in previous contacts with Township Solicitor, Mark Hosterman.
- Commission members asked that Note 57 J. (top of berm) be clarified as a topographical contour.
- Ms. Manley invited Mr. Tralies to meet with them onsite to get a better sense of existing vegetation and landscape so he can better advise them on what will be required moving forward. Mr. Tralies agreed to do so.

- Mr. Flaharty recommended roof dimensions notated per lot be calculated using the maximum size of permitted structures allowed per lot.
- Ms. Manley questioned whether a street stub is necessary. Mr. Woessner replied it needs to be shown to serve as a street extension for possible future expansion of Woodcrest II.
- Chairman Woessner asked the Manleys to review all acreage, chart notations, and landscape calculations for accuracy, he also recommended enlarging text for legibility. Ms. Manley stated all the plans would be “tidied up”.

The Planning Commission urged the Manleys to submit their written response and amended plans in a timely manner. The Manleys thanked the commissioners for their time and replied they are hoping to resubmit within several months.

- 4. Additional Items to be Brought before the Commission – Ordinance No. 217 – Noise.** Marjorie Brown provided an overview of the proposed noise ordinance and informed members she would prepare a letter notifying the Board of Supervisors of the Planning Commission’s recommendations. Noise Ordinance No. 217 was discussed and commission members recommended the following text changes be made on Page 4:

- 3. Maximum Permissible Sound Levels.**

- A. The sound level of any operation (other than operations involved in the Township approved construction or demolition of structures, emergency alarm signals or time signals) shall not exceed the decibel levels in the designated octave bands as stated below. The sound-pressure level shall be measured from using a sound level meter and an octave bank analyzer that conform to specifications published by the American Standards Association. American National Standard Specification for Sound Level Meters, S 1.4-1983, American National Standards Institute, Inc., New York, New York, as may be amended from time to time, and the American Standard Specification for an Octave, Half Octave, and Third Octave Bank Filter Sets, S 1.11-2004, American Standards Association Inc., New York, New York, as may be amended from time to time, shall be used.

Chairman Woessner made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 217 with the suggested text changes. Lance Parson seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

- 5. Northern Federation Update.**

There was no update to come before the Commission.

- 6. Historical Commission Update.**

There was no update brought before the Commission.

- 7. Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee Update.**

There was no update brought before the Commission.

Adjournment.

There was no other business to come before the Commission and Chairman Woessner called for a vote to adjourn. Mr. Lance Parson made a motion to adjourn; the motion was seconded by Larry Tietjen and the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary M. Goheen".

Mary M. Goheen
Planning Commission Secretary