

**MINUTES OF THE
EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2017 AT 7:00 P.M.
(Approved 11/15/17)**

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: Lance Parson and Paul Lacon. Kathryn Alexis and Lawrence Tietjen were absent. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

1. Minutes.

Chairman Woessner called for a vote to approve the minutes of the September 20, 2017 monthly meeting. Lance Parson motioned to approve the minutes as written. Paul Lacon seconded the motion and the motion carried 3-0.

2. Citizen Comments.

There were no citizen comments to come before the Commission.

3. Additional Items to be Brought before the Commission.

Chairman Woessner asked to review the Zoning Hearing Board application, ZHB-287, after discussion of the Minor Subdivision sketch plan submitted by Mr. and Mrs. Brand.

4. Subdivision and Land Development Project Review – Minor Subdivision Sketch Plan – 401 Ebelhare Road

Chairman Woessner invited the Brands to present their sketch plan. Mr. Keith Brand introduced himself and his wife, Tracy, as longtime residents of East Coventry and the current owners of just over ten (10) acres at 401 Ebelhare Road. Mr. Brand remarked he and his wife like East Coventry Township so much they plan to retire here and that is the reason for their appearance before the commissioners tonight. He explained they would like to subdivide their existing acreage into two lots. They plan to utilize the “back” field, which follows the contour of an existing tree line, as the site of their retirement home. Together the commissioners and the Brands reviewed an aerial map of their property and the following comments/questions were generated:

- Chairman Woessner noted the subdivision sketch plan as drawn creates a flag lot which the Township discourages; he told the Brands they would have to go before the Zoning Hearing Board to obtain relief from the required dimensions of the driveway and road frontage widths within their zoning district. He explained the Township enacted ordinances many years ago to prohibit the creation of flag lots in order to stop the proliferation of driveway after driveway along Township roadways. Mr. Parson noted that in their area of the Township it may not be as much of an issue, but the Planning Commission cannot make that determination.
- Mr. Parson asked if the existing barn is used for agricultural purposes. The Brands stated it is not, it is used only for storage. Mr. Woessner suggested they consider moving the driveway 20-feet (20') closer to the accessory barn structure which would widen the drive and roadway frontage of the proposed second parcel, although in doing so, they would still not meet the minimum road frontage requirement.

- Paul Lacon asked where the existing septic system is located. The Brands pointed out its current locale and noted it is far away from the proposed driveway. Ms. Brand informed the Commissioners they recently had a new sand mound system installed for their present home and they expect they'll have to have one installed on the back acreage for their new home as well.
- Mr. Parson inquired about plans for their existing home and barn and the Brands stated they planned to sell.
- The Brands asked what their next steps would be and Chairman Woessner explained the variance process and timeline. The Brands were instructed to pick up a variance application at the Township's administrative office and to reference the online Code of Ordinances when making their variance application. Mr. Woessner further explained that if a variance is granted they would come back before the Planning Commission with engineered drawings and then onto the Board of Supervisors for final approval. Mr. Brand thanked the Commissioners for their time and said he would be by the office the next day to pick up a variance application.

5. Northern Federation Update.

There was no update to offer at this time.

6. Historical Commission Update.

There was no update brought before the Commission.

7. Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee Update.

Chairman Woessner distributed an article concerning regulations surrounding the authority of municipalities to regulate 5g facilities for informational purposes.

3. Reordered from Original Agenda Line-up: Additional Items to be Brought Before the Commission – Zoning Hearing Board – Variance ZHB- 287

Chairman Woessner offered the commissioners a brief overview of the property in question located on Fricks Lock Road. He referenced the property as the site of the Coventry Business Park aka the Colonna tract which went through the subdivision process, through Preliminary approval, years ago but was never developed.

He stated to the best of his understanding the applicant, JJ Kane and Associates, requested two variances related to usage: The sale of heavy equipment (automobile sales are currently permitted) and the allowance of parking as a primary usage on the lot across the street (separate from the sales office). A hearing was held on October 5, 2017 and he stated the Township is still awaiting the Zoning Hearing Board's determination.

The Commissioners gathered to look over the plat plan submitted. They noted the project still had a long way to go through the land development review process and the applicant would have many items of concern to address. Most notably:

- Safe access into and out of the site – there is no traffic light at the corner of Fricks Lock Road and Highway 724 which creates a potentially troublesome intersection; the current configuration does not support a right turn onto Fricks Locks road from Highway 724 with long trailers;
- Possible traffic congestion at the time of auction;

- Aesthetics – 507 parking spaces featuring heavy equipment for sale – should require ample screening and/or a landscaped buffer;
- Stormwater runoff; and
- Harsh lighting.

Mr. Lacon questioned whether a sewer connection to the site would be mandatory and how much impact would the hauling of heavy equipment have on the existing highway and area roadways.

Ms. Linda Ottaviano, 2364 New Schuylkill Road, was in the audience and as a nearby property owner, she echoed the same concerns the Commissioners cited. She also mentioned her additional concerns of fluids leaking from used equipment in transport and questioned whether equipment arriving on trailers would have adequate power line clearance. She asked if there would be further public hearings concerning the proposed development in which residents could voice their opposition. She stated the project was not compatible with the area's existing neighborhoods. Lance Parson stated the project would have to go through a thorough land development review process. Ms. Ottaviano was informed of the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors meeting schedule and she was urged to check the Township website for meeting agenda postings.

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 Paul Lacon and the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary M. Goheen
Planning Commission Secretary