

MINUTES OF THE
EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING HELD ON JULY 17, 2019
(Approved August 21, 2019)

The Planning Commission held their monthly meeting on Wednesday, July 17, 2019. Present for the meeting were Walter Woessner, Kathryn Alexis, Lance Parson, Larry Tietjen and Paul Lacon. Also present was Marjorie Brown, Township Solicitor and Rick Tralies, Township Planner.

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

Mr. Woessner made a motion to accept the Agenda. Mrs. Alexis seconded the motion. The motion carried with a 5-0-0 vote.

MINUTES

Mrs. Alexis made a motion to approve the minutes as presented for the April 17, 2019 monthly meeting. Mr. Parson seconded the motion. The motion carried with a 3-0-2 vote with both Mr. Tietjen and Mr. Lacon abstaining since they were absent for that meeting.

Mr. Parson made a motion to approve the minutes as presented for the May 15, 2019 monthly meeting. Mr. Tietjen seconded the motion. The motion carried with a 4-0-1 vote with Mrs. Alexis abstaining since she was absent for that meeting.

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

Parker Ford Area Act 537 Special Study

Mr. Bill Bohner from Arro Consulting Group gave a presentation on the Parker Ford Area Act 537 Special Study. The Act 537 Plan in general is a Sewage Facilities Plan. The Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan is a Township Planning Document which is the Township's or the Municipalities responsibility to keep that plan in place. One of the items that is required for those preparing the plan for the Township, are review comments or discussions with the Township's Planning Commission, the County Planning Commission and the Health Department. Feedback has been received by both the Chester County Planning Commission and the Chester County Health Department and both were favorable regarding this plan. In 2003 the Township had approved an Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan that actually identified this area as a future public sewer service needs area. In the 2003 Plan that was approved by the DEP, they identified the area as a five and ten-year plan area. Mr. Bohner stated they talked to DEP to get started and DEP is on board with the planning area and the approach. Mr. Bohner stated one of the aspects of the report was where there are truly needs in the area, even though approved years back by DEP. In conversation with DEP, they physically surveyed, not every property, but physically did a survey of on-lot disposal systems (OLDS). They sent out surveys to all of the property owners and got back 37 to 38% of the surveys. From the surveys that had went out and they also did a percentage of field verifications. Generally speaking, there are a lot of systems that are aging and a good bit of them are on parcels that are small (less than an acre) so there is not a lot of room should the system fail. Arro Consulting Group had their in-house sewage enforcement officer look over the data to make sure the thought process made sense from his perspective. Basically, it is showing there is a need for public sewer in this area. The Field Verification Map shows systems that had no malfunction, potential for malfunction and suspected malfunction. Some

property owners were very forthcoming and said they know their system is failing. Mr. Woessner asked if the residents that stated they know their on-lot septic system is failing, are they going to be doing anything to alleviate it. Mr. Bohner stated he would have to look back at the surveys and he doesn't know that they indicated specifically that they were going to address those issues. The Soils Suitability Map shows what areas of the Planning Area has somewhat limited, very limited and not rated areas for the soil in terms of being able to support on-lot treatment and disposal of domestic wastewater. The soil suitability map shows that approximately 75% of the area has soil conditions that are very limited for on-lot disposal systems. Sand mounds are an alternative but you need a good bit of property to have them. Some properties are thin and long and some properties the homes are in the center of the property and you don't necessarily have a lot of room to work. There are also some existing septic systems that are too close to existing wells. The Conceptual Sanitary Sewer Layout Map shows the proposed manholes, proposed pump station, proposed force main, proposed low pressure sewer and proposed gravity. In regards to whether to pump the wastewater to East Vincent or North Coventry, there was a meeting between Mr. Flaharty, Mr. Kraynik and East Vincent Township regarding running everything to the East Vincent Township wastewater treatment plant. East Vincent Township then came back and said they would accept the wastewater but they would need system upgrades on their end. North Coventry wastewater treatment plant already has the capacity. It is more cost effective to send the wastewater to the North Coventry wastewater treatment plant then implementing the improvements that East Vincent would need to have done to make their wastewater treatment plant able to handle the capacity. It appears the best solution is having the wastewater pumped to the pump station near Towpath Park and from there it would go to North Coventry's wastewater treatment plant. A discussion ensued. Mr. Woessner asked Mr. Bohner what he needs from the Planning Commission and he stated he will need the meeting minutes when they are completed.

Mr. Lacon asked who are the decision makers on this, is it the Board of Supervisors? Mr. Bohner stated there will be a public comment period after this meeting and then it proceeds from there with the list of steps that need to be done.

Ordinance Re: Pool Setback Requirements

Ms. Brown gave some background on how the recommendation came about for the pool ordinance to be reviewed and possibly updated. Ms. Brown stated a homeowner received a permit to have a pool installed and the plan showed the pool to be installed 20 feet from the property line as required by the zoning ordinance. However, when the pool was installed, because of a sand mound for on-lot sewage disposal on the property, the installer placed the pool within 10 feet of the property line. The owner then went to the Board of Supervisors to request a waiver of the fee for a variance application, which is approximately \$1,000. The Board of Supervisors requested the zoning ordinance be amended to provide for a 10-foot setback. Ms. Brown has prepared a proposed ordinance for Planning Commission review. Mr. Woessner's question is where do you measure from. A lengthy discussion ensued.

Mrs. Alexis made a motion for the pool setback to be ten feet based on the definition Ms. Brown has identified which is "as measured from the outside edge of the permanent improvements surrounding the body of water". Mr. Lacon seconded the motion. The motion carried with a 3-2-0 vote. Ms. Brown is to make changes and bring the draft ordinance back to the next meeting for further discussion and review.

Ordinance Re: Open Space Plan Implementation – Chester County Review Letters

Ms. Brown reviewed the comments that were received from the Chester County Planning Commission regarding the Ordinance pertaining to the Open Space Plan Implementation. A discussion ensued regarding the proposed changes. Mr. Woessner made a motion to authorize Ms. Brown to make the necessary changes and submit the Ordinance to the Board of Supervisors for

authorization for advertising. Mrs. Alexis seconded the motion. The motion carried with a 5-0-0 vote.

Ordinance Re: Rezoning of Certain Parcels along Old Schuylkill Road and New Schuylkill Road – Chester County Review Letter

Ms. Brown stated this Ordinance is set for a hearing at the Board of Supervisors meeting on August 12, 2019. The review letters received from Chester County Planning Commission and Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission basically had no comments.

Northern Federation Update

Mrs. Alexis stated they had a meeting and had invited some farmers from around the area to talk about what issues farmers have with townships. The biggest issue farmers had is that Pennsylvania has a Right-to-Farm Act or some such ordinance, and that the farmer has had conflict with townships regarding when they want to, for example, build something, the township says you have certain setbacks, and the farmer says they don't because of the Right-to-Farm Act. Due to the fact that East Coventry Township does have setbacks for certain items, Mrs. Alexis feels they should review as to whether or not the setbacks they have are enforceable or not with the Right-to-Farm Act. Mr. Tralies also agrees that this issue is something they should be looking into. Mr. Woessner asked if the Federation is going to stick together. Mrs. Alexis stated yes, one of the members did come back and they are going to continue to meet four (4) times a year.

Mr. Woessner asked Mr. Tralies if he has had a chance to look at the cluster issues that he brought up previously. Mr. Tralies stated he will look back at his emails.

Historical Commission Update

Nothing to report at this time.

Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee

Mr. Woessner stated they voted to not meet in July and August.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Tietjen moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:49 pm. Mrs. Alexis seconded the motion. The motion carried with a 5-0-0 vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Kutsch
Secretary