

Reading Township Planning Commission
Regular meeting
September 4, 2019

The regular monthly meeting of the Reading Township Planning Commission was held at the Reading Township Municipal Building and called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairman John Biese. Planning Commission members in attendance were Dana Shuman, Alicia Wooters, William Bowen and Gerald Shank with Chairman Biese presiding.

Others in attendance included P. Eric Mains, P.E. of Gannett Fleming, Inc.; Andrew Merkel, Senior Planner for Adams County Office of Planning & Development; Attorney Victor Neubaum, Solicitor; Robin Fitzpatrick, President, Adams Economic Alliance; Kevin Holtzinger, Marcia Weaver, Gary Sauble, Emmert Hartzell, Don Godfrey, Robby Sebright, Ladd Mummert and Jason Phillips.

The August 5, 2019 minutes were approved as written on a motion by Mr. Shank and a second by Ms. Wooters, motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Biese asked the Board of Supervisors who were in attendance if the Township should move forward on developing guidelines for the recreation committee. The consensus was to put that discussion on hold at the present time.

SUBDIVISION & LAND DEVELOPMENT

Joseph Lemmon
Subdivision - Sketch Plan

The Township received a request for this plan to be placed on the agenda; however, no plans were received prior to the meeting and there were no representatives at the meeting to present the sketch plan concept for Mr. Lemmon.

ZONING HEARING

There were no Zoning Hearing Board requests at this time.

MISCELLANEOUS

Hampton Fire Company Facilities

The Planning Commission received an update from Ryan Myers of Bennett Williams concerning possible ideas for the use or sale of the fire company building. The Myers review was for the R-2 Zoning District. A quick review on the Zoning map indicates the fire hall may be in the Village Zoning District. Mr. Wilt and Mr. Merkel will review and advise. Mr. Merkel provided additional input on the information, stating the major issue is the zoning district and what is permissible by Township Ordinance. In other locales, some of these type buildings

have been on the market for over nine months and others have had prices drastically reduced from market value in an attempt to sell the vacant buildings.

Adams Economic Alliance Presentation

Mr. Holtzinger informed the Planning Commission he has asked Ms. Fitzpatrick to prepare a presentation, but before she comes forward, he would like to explain the purpose behind his request made to the Adams Economic Alliance and the reason for being on the Planning Commission agenda. Mr. Holtzinger stated he is asking the Planning Commission to once again examine the Township Zoning Districts and to **reclassify his 99-acre farm and 51-acre farm, located on the north side of Route 234, as Commercial/Industrial** so it could be sold to a manufacturing firm. During the remainder of his opening statement and subsequent conversation, Mr. Holtzinger only mentioned the 51-acre farm. He asserts doing this reclassification would assist the Township in the following ways:

- It would reduce the number of proposed building lots in the Township which was an issue expressed by numerous residents. The manufacturing firm would eliminate the land being used for a building development.
- It would increase tax revenue and employment opportunities for the Township in accordance with the plan being presented by Ms. Fitzpatrick.
- It would alleviate the issue of accidents at the intersection of Stoney Point Road and Route 234 by requiring the purchaser to abandon the current intersection and place the Stoney Point Road intersection closer to the entrance to Hampton Heights development.

Ms. Fitzpatrick presented a packet of information to the Planning Commission members describing the purpose, process and property eligibility by using the Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) program developed for Adams County. She explained the purpose is for the Township to examine parcels considered blighted or underutilized and to encourage private investment by granting tax exemption relief for certain new construction and improvements. The process begins within the Municipality, proceeds to the County of Adams and then to the area school district's board of education to approve the granting of a tax exemption pursuant to an approved abatement schedule. Ms. Fitzpatrick provided an analysis of the process and the tax abatement schedule for Mr. Holtzinger's 51-acre farm on the north side of Route 234 and the potential tax revenue for the Township and school district for each year thereafter. Upon completion of the presentation, Mr. Holtzinger asked what the Planning Commission plans to do with the LERTA information and his request to once again renew the discussion on zoning districts. The Planning Commission expressed some concerns with moving forward in making a decision of this magnitude immediately, in light of the fact they have spent numerous months in meetings and research in developing the proposal submitted to the Board of Supervisors in August. Some of the concerns expressed by the Planning Commission included:

- The increase in truck traffic and the high volume of employees coming and going on a daily basis. Mr. Holtzinger stated it would be 15 tractor trailers and 200 employees each day.
- The potential of establishing a precedent that other farms will want to be zoned Commercial/Industrial.
- The shift from preserving the Townships agricultural heritage and having a large manufacturing firm convert farmland into manufacturing space.
- The reality of no guarantee the State of PA would allow the existing intersection of Stoney Point Road and Route 234 to be abandoned and a new intersection built or having funding available for this type of project.

After a time of general discussion and receiving input from Mr. Mains on required traffic studies, Mr. Merkel on government and private funding for this type project and questions from Attorney Neubaum on how LERTA is presently being implemented in Adams County, the Planning Commission followed the recommendation of Attorney Neubaum. On a motion by Mr. Bowen and a second by Mr. Shank, Attorney Neubaum will prepare the required documents to have the Adams County Office of Planning and Development review the proposal and provide an analysis of both the benefits and disadvantages of this proposal so the Planning Commission has additional information in deciding how to proceed. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Holtzinger asked for clarification why additional land along Peepytown Road was not added to the Low Density Residential district. Mr. Merkel explained the decision on where to end the Moderate Density Residential district and the Low Density Residential district was the concern on extending the utilities and infrastructure that would be required for each district.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Bowen and a second by Ms. Wooters; motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Garry R. Wilt
Administrative Assistant