

Reading Township Planning Commission
Regular meeting
February 3, 2020

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 Attorney Susan J. Smith, Solicitor; P. Eric Mains, P.E. of Gannett Fleming, Inc.; Andrew Merkel, Senior Planner for Adams County Office of Planning & Development; Ron Garis of Beyond All Boundaries; Kevin Holtzinger, Jason Phillips, Greg Heefner of the Reading Township Board of Supervisors; George Wolf, Bony Dawood, Jackie King, Sue Myers, Tammy Jo Pearson, Renee Davino, Wanda Spahr, Monica Schryver, Curt Schryver, Angela Highlands, Roy Brodbeck, Gary Shearer, Mark Mitchel, Becky Mitchel and Phil Garland.

The January 6, 2020 minutes were approved as written on a motion by Mr. Shank and a second by Mr. Bowen, motion carried unanimously.

The January 16, 2020 minutes were approved as written on a motion by Mr. Shank and a second by Mr. Bowen, motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Schryver asked why this meeting is being conducted. Mr. Holtzinger explained the purpose of the joint meeting and Attorney Smith clarified the scope and flow of how the meetings will proceed.

SUBDIVISION & LAND DEVELOPMENT

Tammy Pearson & Family
Beyond All Boundaries

Dicks Dam & Hunterstown Hamp. Rd.
Sketch Plan/ZHB 2013-07Z Decision
Continuing Discussion

At the request of the family, Mr. Garis presented another sketch plan proposal for the subdivision of the 90.33 acre farm located at 225 Dicks Dam Road New Oxford PA 17350. The proposal includes a division of the farm into 5 lots varying in size from 4.4 acres to 29.8 acres. Chairman Biese questioned the submission of the sketch plan since the Zoning Hearing Board decision in 2013 was for three parcels of approximately 30-acres each. Attorney Smith emphasized that the Planning Commission does not have the authority to override a Zoning Hearing Board decision and if the family desires to pursue this new plan as presented they must go back to the Zoning Hearing Board with a new application and proceed through that process first.

Hampton Heights Phase 4
SALD #2019-03
Lexington Land Developers
Final Land Development Plan

The Planning Commission received a revised subdivision plan for Phase 4 in addition to capacity letters from Reading Township Municipal Authority, York Water Company and a revised comment review report from Mr. Mains. Mr. Garland walked through the changes and some of the outstanding issues still needing resolved. A few of the major concerns were as follows:

- Lot 55 is described as a passive recreation area. This needs to be site viewed and additional information provided as to what is intended. The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will coordinate with Mr. Mains to arrange a date and time.
- While some of the 13 plan review comments have been satisfied, numerous issues still exist. Mr. Mains has requested the engineer for Hampton Heights contact his office to discuss resolution.
- The Stormwater Management Review Comments cannot be finalized until the Adams County Conservation District finalizes their review and provides input for Mr. Mains to review. Based on some information already provided, this plan will require a Developers Agreement and an Operation and Maintenance Agreement at a minimum.
- Mr. Merkel expressed concern that this project involves two lots where utility connections cross neighboring properties and grinder pump responsibility is placed on the one homeowner. This is unacceptable for the county and should be resolved. Attorney Smith will need to review easements and agreements and how responsibility will be determined.

A motion was made by Mr. Shank and second by Mr. Bowen to table the plan until a revised plan can be reviewed and the comment review reports updated, motion carried unanimously.

ZONING HEARING

There were no Zoning Hearing Board applications at this time.

MISCELLANEOUS

Annual Planning Commission Report

The Planning Commission received and reviewed the Annual Planning Commission Report to be presented to the Board of Supervisors which overviews the work performed by the Planning Commission during the calendar year of 2019 in accordance with PA Municipal Planning Code Section 207(a). On a motion by Mr. Shank and seconded by Ms. Wooters, the Annual Planning Commission Report is to be signed by Chairman Biese and submitted to the Board of Supervisors for review at their next scheduled meeting; motion carried unanimously.

Solar Farms in Reading Township

The Planning Commission received a packet of information concerning solar farms and what, if any, plans may be potential for Reading Township. Chairman Biese stated that based on what he has read and heard, this may be worth discussing and considering in the future as it does allow the farmland to be kept intact and should the solar farms be decommissioned the land would be returned to the natural state. It was mentioned that some solar farms have the panels elevated and normal farming operations can continue even with the panels installed. In reviewing the existing Township Ordinance, Attorney Smith stated this type of use is not specifically listed as a “permitted use” in any Zoning District. Mr. Merkel mentioned that P.J.M. is the grid operator for this region and would need to be involved in any discussion to the feasibility of solar farms and tying into the electrical grid. The Planning Commission is in general agreement to discuss solar farms in the future after the discussion on zoning districts is complete.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Schryver wanted to know about research groups and other types of committees permitted with a Township. Attorney Smith clarified the terminology involving “committees” and what types are permitted by law.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND PLANNING COMMISSION JOINT SESSION – PROPOSED REZONING

The special meeting of the Reading Township Board of Supervisors conducted as a Joint Meeting with the Planning Commission for the sole purpose of discussing the proposed re-zonings of properties not acted on at the previous meeting; discussion on potential mixed-use zoning; future growth area’s and to discuss a potential timetable to proceed. The joint meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Chairman Holtzinger. Kevin Holtzinger, Chairman, Vice-Chairman Greg Heefner and Jason Phillips were present. Susan Smith, Solicitor, P. Eric Mains, P.E. of Gannett Fleming, Inc. and Andrew Merkel, Senior Planner for Adams County Office of Planning & Development also attended the joint meeting.

Mixed-Use Districts & Future Growth Areas

Mr. Merkel presented the joint session with sample “Mixed-Use” Zoning District samples from Hamiltonban Township, Butler Township and Hamilton Township for review and discussion. A time of general discussion included the following talking points:

- Each municipality can discuss how broad or limited the permitted usage would be within a certain district and the samples documents were for consideration to begin the discussion.
- A “mixed-use” district is only one possibility when considering areas of potential growth within a Township. It is important to review the Eastern Adams Joint Comprehensive Plan when discussing potential growth areas as well as mapping where public utilities are placed within the Township that would allow for growth.
- Another option for consideration is an “overlay”. The group has requested information on what this entails and how it may be implemented.

- The group may want to discuss what is “permitted by right” in some districts and determine whether that listing should be expanded or narrowed to align with future plans.
- Mr. Dawood, owner/developer of Chesterfield stated that the group needs to look beyond the immediate and determine long term objectives. Developers do this to determine what type of zoning districts are conducive to the type of projects to construct and what demographics are moving into certain areas.

Timetable

Due to the lateness of the hour and the need to gather additional information on the various items discussed, it was decided to hold future meetings. Once dates are determined and additional information is received, the advertising schedule and meetings will align with the Sunshine and Right-To-Know Laws.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There was no public comment at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Shuman and a second by Mr. Shank; motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Garry Wilt
Administrative Assistant