

**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
September 7, 2021**

The Springfield Township Planning Commission met in a regularly scheduled meeting at 7:08 P.M., in the Boardroom of the Springfield Township Administration Building, located at 1510 Paper Mill Road, Wyndmoor, PA 19038. Present at the meeting were Ms. Helwig, Ms. Murray, Ms. Blankin, Mr. Gutowski, Mr. Sands and Mr. Quill. Also in attendance were Commissioner Baird Standish, Aaron Holly, Community Planner from Montgomery County Planning Commission and Mark Penecale, Director of Planning & Zoning.

**Approval of the Minutes:**

The minutes of the August 17, 2021 meeting were approved with several revisions.

**Commissioner's Report:**

Commissioner Standish informed the Planning Commission that he had no report at this time.

**Old Business:**

There was no old business to discuss.

**New Business:**

The Planning Commission reviewed the two revised renderings for a 36 unit townhouse development for the properties located at 380 and 402 Haws Lane, Flourtown, PA 19031. These renderings were submitted by MEH Investment, LLC and 380 Haws, LP. Prior to the presentation of the two renderings by Mr. Brian Halligan and Mr. Christopher Caravan, Ms. Helwig informed those in attendance that no formal application has been submitted for this possible development. The two renderings are all that has been submitted. The purpose of this meeting is to solicit comments from both the public and Planning Commission Members on the proposed use of this property for residential development as opposed to the permitted uses within the Institutional District.

The two renderings were presented by Mr. Caravan. Both renderings proposed the construction of 36 townhouse units on the 4.7 acre site. The first of the two renderings plotted the location of 20 of the 36 units fronting on Haws Lane, with the balance of units to the rear. This plan has the units arranged in runs of 5 and 6 units per building. The second of the two renderings have all 36 proposed units fronting on a new entry drive, with each building housing 4 and 5 units. Mr. Caravan stated that either of the proposed layouts would involve less impervious coverage than if the site was developed as either assisted living or a life care facility as permitted by the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Caravan also stated that a 36 unit housing development would generate less

traffic than a four story, 107 beds life care facility or assisted living center. In addition, he stated that post development would include on-site storm water management that in his opinion would be beneficial to the surrounding neighborhood. In closing, Mr. Caravan offered that a 36 unit townhouse development would allow for more of the existing wooded area to remain untouched. Mr. Halligan stated that this site has an approved Land Development Plan for the construction of a four story, 107 bed Life Care Facility. He also informed those present that although the approved plan generated little interest when his firm purchased the properties, he has several interested parties in the development of a Life Care Facility or Assisted Living Center. Mr. Halligan also stated that a development as shown on the renderings would have less of an impact on the site and he believed a townhouse development would be a nice transition between the Springfield Township School District's properties and the surrounding residential neighbors. In closing, Mr. Halligan stated that the properties have been offered to both Springfield School District and Springfield Township, however neither were interested in purchasing the site.

Commissioner Standish addressed the issue of purchasing the properties. He stated that funding for the purchase of this site by Springfield Township was not and still is not available. In addition, he stated that Springfield School District is not permitted to purchase property without a defined use for that property. In short, they are not permitted to "Land Bank" properties.

Ms. Helwig opened the discussions with questions from the Planning Commission.

Mr. Gutowski questioned how the green space within the proposed development would be maintained. In addition, he asked how this proposed change would affect the other Institutional Districts located within the Township.

Mr. Caravan responded that the green space would be maintained by the Home Owner's Association. He stated that the plans on how best to address the zoning use issue has not been discussed. In addition, he added that either a zoning change or zoning overlay would be drafted to allow for residential uses within the Institutional District.

Mr. Gutowski asked what uses are permitted within the Institutional District.

Mr. Caravan stated that both a Life Care Facility and an Assisted Living Center are permitted uses.

Mr. Quill asked about the proposed on-site parking and if the applicant felt that additional over flow parking should be considered. He is concerned about over flow parking into the surrounding neighborhoods.

Mr. Caravan stated that in addition to being in compliance with the requirements of the zoning ordinance, each unit has garage parking and each proposed layout has areas that allow for over flow parking.

Ms. Helwig opened the meeting to questions from the residents in attendance.

Mr. Thomas Smith, 413 Ascot Road; Stated that he has concerns about the density proposed for this site and suggested that applicant purchase additional vacant ground from the adjoining assisted living facility and spread out the proposed units and reduce the overall density.

Mr. Halligan stated that Harston Hall has setback, coverage and density requirements that they must adhere to and the selling off of property would not be an option. In addition, he stated that the proposed density of 8 units per acre is similar to what is currently permitted within the D-Residential District.

Mr. Erich Lukas, 408 Suffolk Road; presented an 18 page packet that included pictures of a development Mr. Caravan has developed in Lansdale and Gwynedd that as per his testimony shows both on-site and street parking issues. In addition, photos of Wedgewood Road were submitted showing parking on both sides of the street and the limited drive lane when this occurs. He closed by stating that in his opinion this proposed development would cause a loss of open space, increased traffic and flooding in the surrounding community.

Ms. Ellen Stevenson, 18 Rose Lane; She stated that she believes the applicant should be required to perform a complete environmental study on the site. She petitioned the Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners to consider the environmental impact a development of this size will have on the surrounding neighbors.

Ms. Carol Lockard, 1202 Wakefield Road, She stated that the developer should consider affordable housing for this site. She believes affordable housing is a real need within the Township.

Mr. Richard Metz, 910 Bent Lane, Stated that he has environmental concerns over the development of these properties and the impact that additional housing will have on the existing traffic issues on Haws Lane.

Mr. Patrick Eddis, 720 Avondale Road, He stated that he believes that the applicant should develop the site as per the existing institutional zoning and that a change of zoning to allow for townhomes within the Institutional District will have a negative impact on Springfield Township.

Ms. Linda Charles, 1105 Preston Road, She stated that traffic is already an issue on Haws Lane. In her opinion, any increase in traffic on Haws Lane will further compound the problem.

Mr. Ronald Burnett, 7705 Laurel Lane, He stated that his concerns are for the safety of the children and the limited areas within the Township for those children to play outdoors. He also has concerns with an increase in traffic and additional storm water run-off.

Mr. Marc Levitt, 300 Haws Lane, He stated that he has concerns about a non-residential development on this site that would be open 24 hours a day and 365 days a year. Believes a residential use would have less of an impact on the surrounding neighbors. Mr. Levitt is a 41 year resident of Springfield Township and he is in favor of a townhouse development.

Mr. Kevin Dougher, 214 Glendalough Road, Stated that he was in favor of the townhouse development.

Mr. Bernie Kling, 1909 Sycamore Lane, Stated that he is a 53 year resident of Springfield Township and he is not in favor of any development. His major concern is flooding.

Ms. Cecilia Dougherty, 910 Bent Lane, She stated that flooding is already a major issue within the Township and any additional development will add to the problem.

Ms. Lauren Andrews, 1205 Larchwood Road, She is concerned for the safety of the children that have to walk along Haws Lane to get to school.

This ended the public comment section of the meeting and the Planning Commission was provided the opportunity to state their opinions on residential development verses an institutional use.

Mr. Quill stated his concern that there is an over stock of residential units at this time and has concerns about what a change in zoning would have on the areas of the Township that are zoned for institutional uses.

Ms. Helwig stated that the applicants were well aware of the zoning limitations at the time they purchased the property. If the Township were to consider a zoning amendment or a change in zoning, she would hope that they would consider single family dwellings as a permitted use. This would reduce the density and in part, reduce the traffic this site will generate.

Ms. Murray stated she agrees with Ms. Helwig that since the site is not proposed to be developed with single family dwellings, she would prefer a townhouse use over an institutional use.

Mr. Gutowski stated that he likes this type of housing, but believes it is better suited when built near mass transit. In addition, he stated that he believes this would be a less intense use for the property than an assisted living center.

Commissioner Standish explained to the residents in attendance that this was not a formal application and that no decisions would be made at either this meeting or at the upcoming Board of Commissioner's meetings in October. He stated that it is up to the applicant as to what direction this application goes from here. The applicant can move forward with the approved land development plan for 107 bed assisted living center or explore an application that would allow for residential development on this site. In closing he informed everyone that keeping the property as open space was not an option.

In closing, Mr. Penecale entered into the record the names and addresses of the 22 residents who contacted the Township by way of email to enter their opinion on this proposal. In addition

to the resident's name and address, Mr. Penecale provided a brief overview of the emails received.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 P.M.

The Planning Commission will meet again on September 21, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted  
Mark A. Penecale  
Director of Planning & Zoning

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