

**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
September 21, 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 September 7, 2021 meeting were approved with several revisions.

Old Business:

There was no old business to discuss.

New Business:

Ms. Helwig provided the residents in attendance a brief description of the role of the Planning Commission in the review of subdivision and/or land development applications and explained that any recommendation that is offered tonight will be forwarded to the Board of Commissioners for their consideration. She explained that the Planning Commission is a review committee only and final action on any application is rendered by the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Standish provided a brief history of how this application evolved from a three lot plan with full street improvement, to a two lot plan with the T-Shaped Turn Around.

Mr. Bryan Schaffer of the Engineering Firm of Carta Engineering was in attendance to present the proposal to the Planning Commission. No other representatives of the property owner or the applicant were present. Mr. Schaffer provided a very brief overview of the plan. He stated that this application had received preliminary plan approval in 2016 and what was in front of the Planning Commission this evening was a plan for final land development approval. He explained that this was a two lot plan and that a new single family dwelling is proposed for each parcel. In addition, he stated that Pine Road would be extended with T-Shaped turn around as per the approved preliminary plan. The plan includes an extension of the public sidewalk and curbing into the proposed new roadway. He stated that the project would be served by public utilities and be connected to the sanitary sewer system.

Mr. Gutowski asked who owns the proposed extension to the road way?

Mr. Schaffer stated that he is not sure if the extension and the proposed T-Turn Around would be offered for dedication. In addition, he explained that the driveways are the responsibility of the property owners.

Mr. Sands asked how the applicant plans to address power to the proposed grinder pumps in the event of a power outage.

Mr. Schaffer stated that the sanitary sewer lateral is installed with a holding tank and that in the event of a power outage, the holding tank serves as a reservoir to store waste until power is restored.

Mr. Quill asked Mr. Schaffer what the projected selling price would be.

Mr. Schaffer stated that he does not know what the proposed selling price would be.

Ms. Helwig asked Mr. Schaffer to describe the homes projected to be built on the site.

Mr. Schaffer presented two renderings of the proposed buildings. Each was of a colonial style home with attached side entry garages. He stated that the footprint of each building will be approximately 3,000 square feet.

Mr. Gutowski asked about the existing landscape plan and how it has been impacted over the last six years?

Mr. Schaffer stated that he has not inspected the existing trees on the site or compared the trees on-site today to the landscaping plan submitted with this application.

Ms. Helwig asked if Mr. Schaffer had reviewed the review letter from the Township Engineer.

Mr. Schaffer stated that all issues raised in the Woodrow letter dated July 27, 2021 would be a "Will Comply".

Mr. Penecale asked if this included the milling and overlay of Pine Road.

Mr. Schaffer answered yes.

Mr. Robert Gilchrist – 305 Station Avenue asked who pays for the public improvement.

Mr. Penecale stated that the project costs for those improvement and other improvements such as the new landscaping, storm water management systems and soil erosion controls are escrowed by the developer. Those funds are controlled by the Township and released as different phases of the project are completed.

Ms. Lee Abberley – 528 Jarden Road – Asked how a grinder pump works and what happens to the uphill neighbors in the event of a power failure. She also has concerns about the current conditions on the site. She stated that there are several downed trees and the site is covered in weeds.

Mr. Schaffer described how a grinder pump works and again commented on the holding tanks built into the system to guard against an overflow in the event of a power failure. He agreed that the tree inventory plan needs to be updated.

Mr. Gutowski asked about the impact of the proposed development of the steep slopes on the site.

Mr. Schaffer stated that the houses have been designed to work into the existing topography on the site, with walkout basements, elevated decks and the use of retaining walls. He also explained that most of the steep slope on the site is located to the rear of the property and that this area will not be impacted by the development.

Mr. Gutowski asked if the applicant had looked into any type of riparian buffer plantings along the stream banks that run along the rear property line of this development.

Mr. Schaffer stated that he had not. It was not part of the preliminary plan approval.

Mr. Holly committed to forward Montgomery County Planning Commission's riparian buffer standard to Mr. Penecale, who will forward them to Mr. Schaffer.

Mr. Charles Wurtz – 520 Jaden Road – Stated that the site has not been maintained in several years. He pointed out that the existing house has been left unsecured for weeks on end. He is concerned that over the last five years several trees have been removed from the site and that there has been illegal dumping by the property owner. He also stated that he has major concerns about storm water run-off and this site is subject to all the storm water that flows down Pine Road.

Mr. Penecale asked Mr. Schaffer to use Sheet #4 and Sheet #6 of the plan set to explain to everyone the proposed storm water management systems designed for this development and the limits of disturbance on the site.

Mr. Schaffer – Explained that each of the homes will have a seepage bed that is connected to the downspouts that will collect the rain water and be recharged into the ground water. In addition, he explained the storm sewer inlets, drainage pipes and discharge area that are being installed to control the sheet flows of storm water that passes through this site and discharged to the existing stream. He explained Sheet #6 and described the limit of disturbance on the site. He also stated that system has been designed in excess of the minimum requirements.

Ms. Kathy Boyd – Resident – Questioned how traffic would be addressed as the utilities and road way repairs are being made.

Mr. Schaffer stated that he foresees the developer closing down one lane of Pine Road at the time, so the road will remain open to locate traffic.

Ms. Helwig asked if there were any additional questions or comments. Seeing none, she asked if there was a recommendation on this application.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the application with the following conditions:

1. That the applicant provide a current tree inventory plan, prepared and sealed by an ISA Certified Arborist. This plan should include a grading of the existing tree stock as per the preliminary plan approval. Any differences must be accounted for.
2. The applicant should be required to address the riparian buffer along both sides of the existing stream that runs to the rear of this site.
3. The applicant and/or property owner should be required to maintain the site to include removal of the weeds and downed trees on the site.
4. The applicant should be required to install an emergency generator on each parcel to service the grinder-pump for proposed new single family dwellings.

Commissioner's Report:

Commissioner Standish informed the Planning Commission that the development of 380 & 402 Haws Lane would not include any type of townhouse use. The property owner will be moving forward with an institutional use development. He stated that the deed had been recorded to allow for Birch Lane project to move forward. He announced that a grant had been obtained that allows the Township to move forward with a Township wide trails study. He informed the Commission that an agreement had been reached with the owners of 1110 Church Road for the connective trail to be installed from the proposed sports field complex at the corner of Church Road & Paper Mill Road to the existing sidewalk on Church Road. This now allows for a complete and clear walkway from Paper Mill Road to Lantern Lane. He also announced that the Township will be entering into Trails Study with Montgomery County Planning Commission starting in 2022. In closing, the Commissioner explained the parking issues on Montgomery Avenue during student pick-up and drop-off times. He informed the Commission that a traffic study was being discussed and the Township had the right to require one, as a condition of the land development approval for the construction of the new elementary school.

Prior to the close of the meeting, Mr. Gilchrist – 305 Station Avenue – made statements concerning what he claims are a tax credit for North Hill Country Club and questioning why this was done and how if any credits were handed out why residential property owners were not informed.

Commissioner Standish informed the resident that this was not a tax credit and what has transpired was a result of legal action taken by the Township against the property owner. The Commissioner informed the resident that the Planning Commission was not the forum for this discussion and invited the resident to the next Board of Commissioners Meeting.

Mr. Gilchrist informed the Planning Commission that it was their job to look into this and that at some point they would be reviewing a residential housing development plan for the site. He thanks the Planning Commission for volunteering their time.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 P.M.

The Planning Commission will meet again on October 5, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted
Mark A. Penecale
Director of Planning & Zoning