

FERGUSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
Monday, October 10, 2016
6:00 pm

I. ATTENDANCE

The Planning Commission held its regular meeting on Monday, October 10, 2016 at the Ferguson Township Municipal Building. In attendance were:

Commission:

Marc McMaster, Chairman
Rob Crassweller, Vice Chair
Lisa Strickland, Secretary
Kurt Homan - absent
Ralph Wheland
Erik Scott
Bill Keough, Alternate
Cristin Mitchell, Alternate

Staff:

Ray Stolinas, Director of Planning and Zoning
Lindsay Schoch, Community Planner
Jeff Ressler, Zoning Administrator

Others in attendance included: Jendi Ammerman, Recording Secretary;

II. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. McMaster called the Monday, October 10, 2016 Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

III. Pandy Farm LP Request for Sign Ordinance Amendment

Ray Stolinas stated that staff received an application to amend Chapter 19 – Signs and Billboards of the Code of Ordinances. The application was submitted on behalf of Hoss' Restaurant Operations, Inc. for Pandy Farm LP and is requesting that the ordinance be amended to allow no more than two ground signs if a lot has two or more principal buildings (separate and distinct businesses) on it and there is more than one access point onto an arterial road. Currently, the sign ordinance only permits one ground sign per lot. The specific property affected by this restriction and precipitating this application is located at 1450 and 1500 North Atherton Street which is the location of Hoss's Restaurant and the former Mattress World.

Mr. McMaster pointed out that this did go before the Zoning Hearing Board and it was voted against 5 to 0. Mr. Keough asked how soon the revision of the sign ordinance would be completed. Mr. Stolinas replied that staff is hoping to have it completed and ready for Planning Commissions review by the end of the year. Ms. Schoch stated that she is hoping to have a draft done by the end of the month. Mr. Keough suggested that staff consider using the word "premise" instead of "lot". Mr. Keough stated that he doesn't see a problem with having a second sign on the one lot. Mr. McMaster asked why they consolidated to the two parcels to begin with. Mr. Ressler replied that they wanted to make more parking. Mr. Crassweller suggested that sign height be considered when working on the revision. He stated that sometimes the lower signs are hard to see. Mr. McMaster showed concern for each business being able to put up an individual sign, because plazas could have 15 or more. Mr. Keough clarified that what he meant and what the ordinance change would be for distinctly separate detached buildings. Mr. Ressler pointed out that it would also depend on how premise and building are defined. Mr. Keough stated that as planners there is a need to try to be entrepreneur and business friendly. Not allowing businesses to put up a business sign in this

type of circumstance is not conducive of that. Mr. Stolinas stated that with most cases there is shared signage and the building has individual signage on an awning or façade. However, there may be special circumstances and the question is, is this one of those. Mr. McMaster stated that he believes that they created the issue for themselves, and doesn't think the ordinance should be changed just for one request. Mr. Stolinas stated that part of their argument is the fact that car dealerships are allowed to have up to three signs. Ms. Mitchell asked if there is a reason why these two businesses can't use just one sign. Mr. Ressler stated that they can, they just don't want to. Hoss's doesn't want to change or share their sign.

Ms. Strickland stated she is for more consolidated signage. She gave multiple examples of bad signage within the Township already. Ms. Strickland pointed out that it may be an issue that one type of business (i.e. car dealerships) are allowed to have multiple signs but other businesses are not. She recommended that staff keep that in mind while they are rewriting the ordinance.

Mr. Keough pointed out that whatever decision is made on this could impact whether certain businesses want to come to the area or not.

Mr. Stolinas stated that the height or number of allowed signs in a commercial area has not been changed from the old ordinance and will stay that way unless the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors decide it needs to be changed. Mr. McMaster asked if the property can be subdivided. Mr. Ressler stated that it could be possible, however, he isn't sure without looking into it. It would be harder to do so now, because of the way the parking is laid out. Mr. Stolinas stated there are approximately 120 parking spaces.

Mr. Keough suggested finding out how many businesses this change, if it were to occur, would affect. Mr. McMaster stated that probably all the businesses that it would affect would opt to put up as many signs as they are allowed. However, if you were to ask residents they would probably vote against having so many signs. Ms. Strickland showed concern that it could head down a slippery slope. As to where a strip of connected businesses may all want individual signs for their business. Mr. Wheland stated that he believes a sign on the building may be more noticeable anyways. Mr. Stolinas and Mr. Ressler pointed out that if someone moved into the Mattress World building they would be able to advertise on the existing awnings. Mr. Keough inquired if the distance between the road and the building would make a difference or be a concern, as far as advertising on the building compared to having a sign closer to the road. Mr. Wheland inquired about whether a sign along the road would affect the sight distance of people driving. Mr. Ressler stated the ordinance reads that the sign must be 15 feet back from the point where the driveway connects onto the roadway.

Mr. Wheland moved that the ordinance not be amended in regards to Hoss' Restaurant Operations request. Ms. Mitchell seconded the motion. The Board came to an agreement.

IV. PLANNING DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Stolinas reviewed the Planning & Zoning Director's Report. On September 20th the Planning & Zoning Director and Zoning Administrator met with Bruce Pincus, General Counsel at Minitab, Inc. regarding the previous variance granting relief from parking standards. Also on September 20th the Planning & Zoning Director, Zoning Administrator and Township Manager met with Rita Graef, Curator, Pasto Agricultural Museum regarding permitted use activities within the Agricultural Research Zoning District. Mr. Stolinas stated that Ms. Graef was inquiring about event type uses, that would benefit the museum. Mr. Ressler stated that staff's recommendation was to include the events in the re-write of the ordinance if the Board chooses to include special events. On September 21st the Planning & Zoning Director, Zoning Administrator, Community Planner and Township Manager met with Michael Pratt, Keller Engineers pertaining to the Pine Hall General Master Plan submission process and modification requests. On September 22nd and October 6th the Planning & Zoning Director, Zoning Administrator and Community Planner met with the Sourcewater Protection Work Group and discussed the progress made thus far on the draft. The Work Group also discussed the proposed overlay map that may potentially include a township-wide Zone II and III Sourcewater Overlay with associated insets of the Zone

I protection areas. On September 23rd the Planning & Zoning Director and Community Planner attended the Spring Creek Water Resources Monitoring Project Field Day at Millbrook Marsh. On October 4th the Planning & Zoning Director, Assistant Township Manager and Public Works Director met to review interview questions for the PZ/PW Administrative Assistant Position. On September 6th the Planning & Zoning Director, Community Planner and Zoning Administrator met with Patti Hartle from the Fairbrook United Methodist Church regarding a proposed digital message board. Ms. Strickland inquired as to what the current ordinance allows as far as digital message boards. Mr. Ressler stated that electronic changeable letters are not permitted, other than time and temperature. It'll be a question to come before the Planning Commission Board in the future, whether or not to include digital message boards in the re-write and to what extent. Mr. Stolinas pointed out that colors and luminosity will have to be considered. Mr. Keough stated that there is a difference between digital boards that have a message that is scrolling through versus a digital board that has a station one sign message that may change day to day. On October 3rd the Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors approved appointing the Planning & Zoning Director to the Centre County Housing & Land Trust Board of Directors as a result of Ferguson Township's adoption of the MOU with CCHLT. The Planning & Zoning Director and Community Planner will be attending the American Planning Association/PA Chapter Annual Conference in Allentown, PA October 16th through 18th.

Mr. Keough inquired as to the status of the Affordable Housing Ordinance. Mr. Stolinas replied that it is scheduled to be on Monday October 17th's Board of Supervisors Meeting agenda.

V. ACTIVE PLANS UPDATE

Ms. Schoch reviewed the active plans in the township. This included: Subdivision/Replot of lands of Accuweather, Inc. and Sound Technology, Inc., Specific Implementation Plan – The Crossings at State College, Dunkin' Donuts/Weis Gas-N-Go Land Development Plan, CSC Northland/Proposed Commercial Development-Buffalo Wild Wings/Corner of North Atherton and Blue Course Drive, Bowman Subdivision/486 Circleville Road, The Cottages at State College Final PRD/Whitehall Road and Blue Course Drive, Whitehall Road Regional Park and Foxpointe PRD Section 1D-Hunter's Chase Phase 6.

VI. CENTRE REGION PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT

Ms. Strickland stated that the Centre Region Planning Commission met on Thursday October 6th. Patton Township now has the Farm Café's Ordinance. They essentially used the same Ordinance and changed some of the wording. There was discussion on wording within the ordinance that stated 'the restaurant should aim to use as much local or Pennsylvania produce as possible'. There was concern of the wording being too loose. However, overall everyone was very supportive of it. There was an update on the State of Housing Report. It is an extensive report on everything related to housing in the Centre Region. An update was also heard on the potential locations to expand the Beneficial Reuse Water System. Mr. Keough inquired as to whether they are trying to expand their existing sights or developing new ones. Ms. Strickland stated that they are looking into both options. Mr. Keough showed concern about the plumbing system needing to be installed to account for the potential use of reuse water versus converting an existing one. Mr. McMaster stated that it is his belief that they need to be two separate systems. Ms. Strickland stated that they are looking into using it at Tussey Mountain for snow and a golf course. Mr. McMaster pointed out that for someone to use it they would have to use a lot of water, for example car washes, laundry facilities and golf courses. Ms. Strickland stated that another topic of discussion at the meeting included a filter that UAJA will need in the future and that the price tag was looking to be around \$9 million. They also discussed an issue with the water hydrants, they can't be flushed unless they are de-chlorinated.

VII. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 12, 2016 MEETING MINUTES

Ms. Strickland stated that under roman numeral IX, she did not suggest that the Planning Commission get the ordinance two weeks before the public but rather that the agenda with the ordinance be sent out earlier in the week.

Mr. Keough requested that under roman numeral IX where it reads 'Mr. Keough stated that the PA Farm Bureau will need to review this document' be changed to read 'Mr. Keough shared a desire that the PA Farm Bureau review the document'.

Ms. Schoch stated that she had a few minor corrections as well. For example, Lisa Strickland should be listed as Secretary and Mr. Steve be changed to Mr. Lyncha.

Mr. Crassweller made a motion to APPROVE the September 12, 2016 Planning Commission meeting minutes as amended. Ms. Strickland seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Strickland made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Crassweller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

With no further business, the October 10, 2016 Regular Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 7:09pm.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Scott Harkcom, Secretary
For the Planning Commission