

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING AUGUST 27, 2019

Attendees: Dave Shula, Sherri Glantz Patchen, Patrick Doran, Vince Manuele, Peter Cornog, Bob Dambman, Charles L. Guttenplan, AICP, Director of Planning & Zoning, Krista Heinrich, Township Engineer, T&M Associates, Amy Grossman, BOS Liaison and Dave Sander, Township Solicitor

1. Call to order: 7:00 PM by Chair Manuele
2. Announcements & Correspondence

Announcements:

- Supervisor Grossman announced that going forward, the Township Solicitor will be attending all Planning Commission meetings.

Correspondence:

3. Approval of Minutes:

- Mr. Shula moved to approve the minutes from the August 13, 2019 meeting; seconded by Ms. Patchen. Vote 5-0-1 (Mr. Dambman abstained, not present at that meeting)

4. Zoning Hearing Board Appeals: None

5. Subdivision & Land Development Applications: None

6. Conditional Use Applications:

- CU#04-19 Theresa Jones / Fabulous Me, LLC, 632 Germantown Pike, Lafayette Hill, PA; Personal Service Shop in VC-1 District. Carl Weiner, Esquire, the applicant's representative and Theresa Jones, the applicant, were present. The applicant is proposing a personal service shop for cosmetology, where microblading, microshading, and henna processing will be offered. The facility is proposed for 'Unit F' at 632 Germantown Pike, an existing multi-use building at the corner of Crescent Avenue. Office hours will be generally in the evening and weekends; there is ample parking; waste products will be sent out for disposal; there are no fumes or smells created from this process; there will not be any signage; and state licensing is not required, just state certification. The Public Hearing by the Board of Supervisors is scheduled for September 12th. Ms. Patchen made a motion to recommend approval of the Conditional Use; seconded by Mr. Doran. Vote 6-0

7. Old Business:

- Comprehensive Plan (Selective) Update; Continued Discussion. This is a continuation of discussion and review of the Selective Comprehensive Plan Update. The Planning Commission was asked to discuss the land use plan with changes they currently want to see with Mr. Manuele marking the changes on the overlay land use plan; they will be sent to Kimberly Baptiste to make the changes to the map and text once this process is completed. It was stated that mixed use in one area may differ from another area, these will be defined by zoning; and it is important to focus on mixed use vs residential, differentiate character areas.
- Discussion of Mixed Use Corridor areas:

Bethlehem Pike Corridor – changing the stretch of Bethlehem Pike from E. Valley Green Road up to Church Road to residential; putting a historic district overlay over Bethlehem Pike at Pennsylvania Avenue to Mathers Mill as a recognition that the area has historic significance (“overlay” may not be appropriate term ultimately because it is a zoning term); south of E. Valley Green Rd. to the Springfield border stays mixed use. Mr. Guttenplan clarified the corridor is the same except the central area was changed to

residential and overlay. Were we switching Hollywood Road to residential (it is already zoned “B” residential with a few businesses on Bethlehem Pike zoned VC-1). Mr. Guttenplan stated it may not be appropriate on the Land Use Plan to reclassify such a small area. Where existing residential is, should not be changed to any other use; keeping its current boundaries but describe in text existing residential areas. Riparian and Flood Plain need to be delineated here. The text has recommendations about Riparian and Flood Plain and Historic, we might be getting bogged down delineating on the map. Inventory of environmental features/types of open spaces needs to be done. Mr. Guttenplan stated there is a map in the document that distinguished open spaces (p. 18). Some of the inventory already exists in the document. MJ Fisher, Farmar Lane – the open area across from Farmar Lane is floodplain, does that need to be acknowledged on the map (not part of this character zone). Eli Glick – 7 Whitefield Drive – what happened to going out and looking at various sites to get an inventory (the plan is to do this first, mark up to reflect discussion, then do the inventory); why isn’t it on the agendas to let everyone know specifically what is going to be talked about at each meeting (it is a fluid process, no specific topics). One purpose of the land use plan is to protect the environment, no development should happen on east side of Bethlehem Pike (vicinity of Harth properties). Existing properties can stay, but no future development beyond what is there today. Craig Walter, 637 Ridge Pike, Ranger at the State Park, stated all the area shown is not park land, some owned by Harth, Clifton House, others.

Germantown Pike Corridor – looking at this area to see if it should remain mixed use or change to residential. Mr. Glick would like to see the entire area southeast of Germantown Pike towards Andorra Road as Conservational Residential (all members are supportive of the change); the 5 acre lots near his street should be protected (all agreed to extending conservation overlay across Germantown Pike similar to mixed use corridors). Mr. Kaufman stated there are some larger acre lots on the north side of Germantown Pike (don’t want to start parsing it out parcel by parcel);

Ridge Pike Corridor – much of the entire length of Ridge Pike is mixed use, except for a small piece. It was agreed the areas from Joshua Road to Church Road, south side should be changed to residential reflecting the existing character, the opposite side of the street stay residential with the existing commercial businesses remaining as non-conforming. Steve Kaufman, Spring Mill Road to Church Road is largely residential, why change (some residents would like to see more options; and it is mixed use and should be so in the future). The area south of Ridge Pike from Joshua to Harts Lane should be residential and eliminate corridor on north side of Ridge Pike from Church Road. Nancy Walter, 637 Ridge Pike, wanted to know what happens to the existing commercial businesses (nothing); what about the historic homes on Ridge Pike, they need to be preserved. Perry Swartz, Silverbell Lane, stated Whitemarsh has always been an oasis, if you allow commercial it destroys the vibe of the residential area. Mixed uses does not necessarily mean commercial, may allow for other non-residential uses (what happens is governed by zoning and what uses are allowed). Eli Glick – what about the County’s plans for Ridge Pike and how it impacts this vision, the residential status for this area needs to be protected (the perception of the Ridge Pike project may be wrong, not meant to be a high speed, commercial raceway, just improve traffic flow, safety and pedestrian accessibility; Mr. Sander pointed out that the County’s project is separate from our comprehensive plan project).

- Mr. Sander cautioned that there could be constitutional issues with removing most of mixed use and commercial opportunities along the various corridors, the Township has to have a plan that is legally defensible and provides for future development.
- **Butler Pike** – Commission members agreed that Spring Mill Road to Cardinal Lane should be residential.
- All are ‘ok’ with Research and Development character areas.
- The Board of Supervisors want to take action by the end of the year, the Commission would like them to reconsider.
- The next step for the Planning Commission is to continue discussion on refining the character areas on the Future Land Use Plan. Topics for the next meeting: wrap up discussion of character areas & Floodplain/Riparian areas. MJ Fisher asked about Heavy Industrial at quarries and what should be (will look into the projections for Quarry Holes 2 and 3). Mr. Glick would like an environmental statement at the beginning of the document that talks about natural resources in the Township. He would also like to know who the stakeholders are and they should be referenced in the appendix.

8. New Business: None

9. Public Comment:

10. Adjournment:

- There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 9:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles L. Guttenplan, AICP, Director of Planning & Zoning

The Planning Commission is appointed as an advisory group to the Board of Supervisors and the Zoning Hearing Board with respect to comprehensive land use planning, existing land use, and various land use and zoning applications in Whitmarsh Township. No formal decisions are rendered by the Planning Commission. Formal decisions are rendered by the Board of Supervisors or Zoning Hearing Board, as prescribed by law, based on the type of application.

All written or graphic material that is presented to the Planning Commission at a public meeting shall be kept in Township files and is subject to examination under the PA Right-to-know Law.