

The monthly meeting of the Lower Moreland Township Planning Commission was held on the above date in the meeting room of the Township Municipal Building. Present were Messrs. Pollock, Chapman, Costello, Potok, Krebs, Lombardi, Mrs. Friedrich Fogel, Mrs. Souder, Planner Driscoll, Assistant Manager Elton, and Commissioner Devinney.

Chairman Pollock called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The minutes of the September 24, 2009 Planning Commission meeting, were approved as submitted.

Philmont Avenue Corridor re-zoning discussion

For discussion was the Revitalization District Zoning Amendment, revised September 22, 2009. Mr. Pollock asked if there had been any changes. Mr. Driscoll, Township Planner, advised the Township is in receipt of a review letter from the Montgomery County Planning Commission dated October 14, 2009 and will comply with all of the comments. Mr. Driscoll explained if the Planning Commission was interested in making a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners, it would be contingent upon incorporating the Montgomery County Planning Commission's comments into the ordinance.

Mrs. Friedrich Fogel questioned the maximum building height comment from Montgomery County Planning Commission's review letter and commented that the ordinance at fifty feet or four stories is satisfactory to her. A discussion on building height of surrounding buildings continued.

Mr. Pollock asked about the floodway and concerning building height. Mr. Driscoll explained the original version of the ordinance had proposed a higher maximum building height at the staff level and after discussion with the Planning Commission, the consensus of the Commission is the ordinance, as proposed.

Mr. Pollock stated maybe in a floodway an additional story could be added but used only for parking. Mr. Costello commented that no parking should be allowed on the first floor if the property is in a floodway and the height limit should be allowed to be raised for these properties. Mr. Pollock commented that he is concerned to have an ordinance that will not be able to be developed because of the flooding and developers cost.

Mrs. Friedrich Fogel commented the Montgomery County Planning Commission's comment about lot consolidation was good.

Mr. Potok commented that flexibility will be needed with this ordinance and developers to make the corridor successful. Mr. Pollock suggested that increased height in a floodway be a conditional use that would be a Board of Commissioners decision rather than the Zoning Hearing Board.

Mr. Pollock asked if there were any buildings that would be able to be rebuilt in the corridor today that would not have to be built up.

Mr. Pollock suggested that the ordinance at least have the flexibility to go up, being concerned what has to occur to get above the floodway to even have any kind of development in certain areas. Mr. Pollock stated the ordinance should have at least four stories with occupied floors and if the building needs to be more than fifty feet than it needs to get a conditional use.

Mr. Krebs asked if this conditional use would be for anyone. Mr. Pollock stated that the conditional use could be for the areas impacted by the floodway.

Mr. Lombardi and Mrs. Friedrich Fogel asked about the signs of the proposed ordinance. Mr. Pollock stated the ordinance will allow ground signs, building signs, awnings and projecting signs. Mr. Chapman questioned the Montgomery County Planning Commission's comment on signs advertising a use no longer in existence. Mr. Driscoll explained originally it was stated the sign must be removed if the business was no longer there after 180 days. The Planning Commission wanted all parts of the sign, including the post, to be removed. The Montgomery County Planning Commission's comment states to remove the sign is adequate.

Mr. Costello asked if Septa purchases the properties by the train station, are they going to be allowed to put guard rails up against the street with this off street parking requirement? Mrs. Elton stated the ordinance does not explicitly exclude guardrails. Mr. Driscoll explained there is nothing in the proposed ordinance that would regulate guard rails. Mr. Costello asked how will Septa add the parking on the incline and it be aesthetic.

Mrs. Elton stated the ordinance states if parking is in the front yard, a knee wall with a buffer is required. Mrs. Friedrich Fogel stated that the Montgomery County Planning Commission's comment number eight stated all parking should be in the rear. Mr. Pollock stated the will comply with the Montgomery County Planning Commission's entire review letter comments will be in conflict then. Mr. Pollock stated the ordinance proposed allows parking in the front yard limited to a sixty-foot depth.

Mr. Driscoll stated the ordinance can explicitly exclude the use of guardrails as counting towards the buffer.

Mrs. Friedrich Fogel asked why Ridgeway Park was included in the revitalization? Mrs. Elton stated that property should not be included in the revitalization map amendment. The map amendment is for the south side of Philmont Avenue only, other than the properties to the west of Red Lion Road and east of Anne Street.

Mr. Pollock asked why only the Fredericks property was included on the north side of Philmont Avenue. Mrs. Elton explained the properties to the west of Red Lion Road and east of Anne Street are the only properties zoned industrial.

Mrs. Friedrich Fogel asked about open space and riparian corridors along the stream to help prevent flooding. Mr. Driscoll stated number four states that areas within fifty feet of a watercourse shall retain their natural vegetation.

Mrs. Friedrich Fogel asked about the streetlights along the streets and if township wide the streetlights should be the same. Mr. Driscoll explained that certain areas higher streetlights are required to aid vehicular circulation and other streetlights may be shorter and use less candle power to invite a more walkable environment to aid pedestrians. Mrs. Friedrich Fogel asked where will be required streetlights for vehicular traffic? Mr. Driscoll explained the ordinance is geared to the pedestrian streetlight guidelines. Mr. Potok asked if a uniformed code for the Township can be created for both pedestrian and vehicular streetlights? Mr. Driscoll stated the ordinance does have both guidelines, in two separate sections.

Mrs. Friedrich Fogel asked about the ordinance section of tractor trailer restriction in the front or side yard for no more than twenty-four hours and if we even want them in the back. Mr. Driscoll stated some businesses require trailers to stay overnight, and the ordinance provides to keep them out of view.

Mr. Potok asked about certain instances businesses rent trailers and park in the rear because they are using them instead of renting out more space and asked if this will be allowed? Mr. Driscoll stated this ordinance intends to address what can be seen from the street. Mrs. Elton stated the Township is looking into ordinance revisions for portable storage units and trailers.

Mr. Pollock opened up the discussion for the public. David Ripstein, a realtor, asked about the Frederick's property and the proposed new map and that only half of the property is proposed in the new district. Mr. Ripstein pointed out other parcels that the proposed map would propose to create the split zoning. Mr. Driscoll explained the entire parcel would be included in the rezoning.

Mr. Pollock asked if there were any concerns with the permitted uses proposed. Mr. Pollock asked if there were any distinctions between a take-out restaurant or a sit-down restaurant? Mrs. Elton explained there were none, only drive-through restaurants are prohibited.

Mr. Pollock asked if there was any professional office use in this ordinance. Mrs. Elton stated the Township is looking at how other surrounding municipalities define clinics and make that a definition in the zoning ordinance.

Mr. Pollack recommends the Township Commissioners consider approval of the revised draft of the Revitalization Zoning District Amendment dated November 19, 2009. Incorporate into that ordinance anything deemed not contradictory as stated in the October 14, 2009 letter from the Montgomery County Planning Commission with consideration being given to establishing flexibility of the maximum height to be allowed, that there be provision for a conditional use to allow one floor above the four story fifty foot height limitation based on certain criteria to be established and inconsideration of stormwater concerns, parking lots exclude guard rails and changing sign abandonment for a year.

Mrs. Friedrich Fogel made the motion. Seconded by Mr. Lombardi.

New/Old Business

Mr. Pollock asked if a December meeting is necessary. Mrs. Elton stated no December meeting is required, nothing has been submitted to the Township. Mr. Pollock asked if a December meeting should be scheduled in case. Mrs. Elton stated a December 10, 2009 meeting has been made available by the Planning Commission in case one is necessary. The next regularly scheduled meeting for January is January 28, 2010.

Mrs. Friedrich Fogel asked if we can make sure 2010 meeting dates can be a January agenda item.

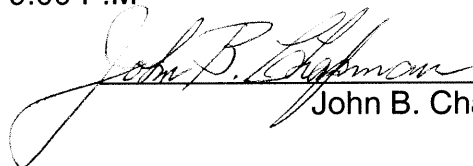
Mr. Pollock asked if Mermelstein submitted revised plans yet. Mrs. Elton explained he did not and his extension runs until the end of February. Mr. Pollock asked what the Commissioners recommended with regards to the debate to widen or not widen. Mrs. Elton stated the Commissioners were not in favor of any waivers.

Mr. Costello stated about a week ago he and Mr. Potok went back to the corridor to review some of the properties that were reviewed prior. Mr. Costello stated more dumping is occurred and fire code enforcement is needed. Mr. Costello stated the codes must be enforced. Mrs. Elton stated she will discuss this with the code enforcement department again.

Mr. Pollock stated the future Commissioner from Ward 2 is in the audience, Jill Blumhardt, recently elected. Mr. Pollock stated sitting next to her, Denise Kuritz, re-elected to a second term and as always Mr. Fran Devinney, President of the Board of Commissioners.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission, a unanimous vote for adjournment was in order at 9:00 P.M.



John B. Chapman, Vice Chairman