TOWNSHIP OF INDIANA

PLANNING COMMISSION

APRIL 26, 2023

The regular meeting of the Indiana Township Planning Commission was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Michael Rouggie with the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was recorded on audio cassette.

The roll was called and Planning Commission Members present were David Geahry, Lisa Lachina, Michael Rouggie, and Daniel Taylor. Patrick Miller did not attend. Also in attendance were Code Enforcement Officer Jeffrey S. Curti, Recording Secretary Jacquelyn Rouggie, Township Engineer Daniel Slagle from Nichols & Slagle Engineering, and Solicitor Gavin Robb from Tucker Arensberg.

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MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 22, 2023

Mr. Taylor said on Page 2, in the 4th paragraph, the word "in" should be replaced to the word "on" under Item 1.

Mr. Taylor said on Page 3, in the 1st paragraph, under Item 7, the word "removed" is missing between "....the trees" and "prior to being..".

Mr. Taylor said in the motion on Page 3, Item 4, the word "or" should be replaced with "of". He also asked for clarification of "Sheet 1 of 1". It was found to be a correct statement; there was only one Sheet in that Plan set. The words "("Lot Consolidation Plan")" were added to make it clearer.

Mr. Taylor also said in that same motion, under Item 5, the word "to" after "parallel parking" should be replaced with "on".

Mr. Taylor made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lachina, to approve the March 22, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

None were submitted for consideration.

OLD BUSINESS

REVISIONS TO THE PRD SECTION OF THE TOWNSHIP'S ZONING ORDINANCE #368

Solicitor Robb gave an overview of the status of reviewing this Section of the Township's Zoning Ordinance. He said a "draft" copy of the proposed revisions are currently posted on the Township's website for public viewing, in both "red-line" and "combined draft" formats. He said residents and taxpayers of Indiana Township are being asked to present their opinions to the Planning Commission, the Township's Engineer Dan Slagle, Code Enforcement Officer Jeff Curti, and himself, at tonight's meeting. Mr. Robb explained that after Public Comments are received, then the

meeting will be opened up for the Planning Commission for their comments. He said he believes after all of the comments are made tonight, any action on this revision will be tabled for a month in order for everyone's comments to be considered. He reminded everyone that the Planning Commission is a "recommending body" only; they cannot vote on the proposed changes. They make a recommendation to the Township Board of Supervisors, who ultimately make the final vote on any changes to the Ordinance. He said he believes that the Planning Commission will forward on their recommendations to the Board of Supervisors by June or July, then a Public Hearing will be held and the proposed changes will also be sent to Allegheny County for their review. After that point, another Public Hearing would be held before the changes to the Ordinance would become final.

Mr. Robb proceeded in opening the meeting for public input.

Denise Maholic of 159 Little Deer Creek Road, asked if the intent of this change is to give contractors the right to make changes without going through the normal process of securing Permits. Mr. Rouggie said no. Mr. Robb explained to her they are only intending to tighten-up the PRD section of the Township's Zoning Ordinance, such as making possible setback changes and any other items that may be needed for proposed land developments. Ms. Maholic said she is concerned about a pub she lives next to and if they could just build what they want without going through the proper procedures. Mr. Robb said changes involving Planned Residential Developments (PRD's) are only being discussed, not all businesses. He explained to her what a PRD is, and how it enables development to occur when there are steep hillsides on land where developments are being considered, and how it gives developers more flexibility and balance to their proposals. He said PRD's encourage responsible development. Ms. Maholic added that the railroad tunnel in Rural Ridge is unbearable.

Chris Capone of 3606 Windsor Court, passed out a chart he prepared comparing "Table IV-A & Table III-B" from the current Zoning Ordinance regarding Dwelling Units per acres and lot sizes in the "RE", "LDR", and "MDR" zoning districts. A discussion was held between the differences of Multiple Subdivisions vs. PRD's. Mr. Capone said he feels the comparisons are inconsistent with the Zoning. He said he understands the concept of PRD's is to provide for more flexibility in developments. Mr. Capone said he feels the "MDR" zoning district is a main area to consider when making changes.

Doug Golubic of 1941 Fox Chapel Road, said he agrees with some of the proposed changes. However, he said he feels the trend is to make it easier on a developer to build rather than to consider residents' concerns. He said the proposed "Indiana Trails PRD" that is located near his home is an example. He feels the Ordinance needs to be made more restrictive, and that residents should be represented more than the wants made by developers. He said he feels that residents' concerns are not being considered. He said residents have said they would like Single Family Dwellings only. He said Indiana Township is in the Fox Chapel School District, which entices more families to buy and build here.

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Emily Gouwens of 54 Ridgeland Drive, said she feels that residents concerns should be considered more, which is done in the surrounding municipalities. She reviewed the "red-line" version of the proposed changes and said she does not agree with a lot of what is being proposed. She said the members of the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors are "stewards" to the people and they should consider what the people want. She said the "bigger picture" needs considered, i.e. trees, setbacks, the school district and children, etc. She said she took a video of the traffic in the area during the times of school drop off and pickups and offered to share it with the Planning Commission. She said there is no safety data in place, and she feels too much density is being allowed as a whole. She also said the Township's Comprehensive Plan needs to be considered. Ms. Gouwens said when the Fox Chapel Estates PRD (on the same land as Indiana Trails) previously received "tentative approval" by the Board of Supervisors, that she, as well as several other families, appealed the decision and that in two different court cases, it was found that the PRD was not validated.

Linda Massarelli of 5 Pine Creek Drive, said at the last Planning Commission meeting, Supervisor Jon Neumann was not permitted to speak, which she feels is wrong. She feels that this was a lack of respect to the residents by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. She said traffic is already very bad in the area of the proposed Indiana Trails PRD, and asked why a new Traffic Study is not being required. She said she feels that nobody is listening to the residents' concerns. Ms. Massarelli said she feels the proposed changes to the PRD section of the Ordinance are just being pushed through as fast as possible; she feels no changes should be made until after the next upcoming election. She said 4 of the 5 Board Members are up for re-election and an entirely new Board could be in place after the November election.

Earl Lynch of 880 Dorseyville Road, handed out copies of a memo he put together detailing his concerns. He reviewed the document for them, and explained his comments on the various changes and asked that they be considered. He said the Township's Comprehensive Plan is 10 years old and out of date. He said he feels it should be updated before any changes are made to the PRD Section of the Zoning Ordinance. He said a lot of changes have happened. He said parts of the changes being proposed are very vague. He said traffic and Permitted Densities and Bulk Requirements should be looked at closely. He said more attention needs to be given to development, especially because most of the other municipalities in the Fox Chapel School District are already built out, and Indiana Township still has a lot of developable land available.

Nettie Owens of 109 Bruno Drive, read through the "red-lined" version of the proposed changes to the PRD section of the Zoning Ordinance. She expressed her opinions of the various sections. She said she feels a lot of clarification needs to be given, and feels some of the verbiage is confusing. She said if all developments come in as PRD's, it could really impact the Township.

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Deborah Krotec of 102 Hodil Terrace, said she agrees with the comments that were made tonight by the residents. She said consideration should be given as to how Indiana Township could look in the next 10 years.

Ellen Kight of 100 Rawlins Run Road, said she also agrees with a lot of comments that were made tonight. She especially feels the Township's Comprehensive Plan is outdated and needs to be brought up to date. She said she expressed her concern of it being outdated at a Board of Supervisors' meeting about 3 years ago, but nothing was done. Mr. Taylor reminded Ms. Kight that the Planning Commission cannot authorize the Board of Supervisors' to update the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Kight said she has worked in this type of "field" in the past, and she knows the procedures.

Jon Neumann of 222 Chatham Lane asked if he could be permitted to speak as a citizen and not as a Township Supervisor. He said he feels the review procedure of the PRD section of the Zoning Ordinance needs to slow down; he feels it is being rushed through. He said he also agrees with a lot of the comments that were made at the meeting this evening. Mr. Neumann said he feels the Comprehensive Plan needs to be updated first before any changes are made to the Zoning Ordinance. He asked why standards are being proposed to be more relaxed in the PRD section. He said he is not against development; he just wants democracy.

Emily Cook of 1059 Rural Ridge Drive, said she grew up in Squirrel Hill but moved to Indiana Township. She said she think things need to be slowed down. She said she feels residents are moving out of the Township because there is too much development.

Jonathan Spatz of 436 Church Lane, said he has been following PRD's being built in other places for the past couple years, and gave some samples of ones he has seen. He does not feel there are enough amenities offered to new residents, such as recreation, shopping, etc., nor do many exist in the area. He feels the developments are too isolated.

Solicitor Robb asked if anyone else wished to speak. Nobody raised their hands, so he ended the "public comment" period. Chairman Rouggie opened the meeting to the Planning Commission for their comments. Mr. Taylor said he sent an email to Mr. Curti regarding Section 407(I). He said in the second sentence, it says "single family residential" where it should say "two-family dwellings or multiple family dwellings". He said he changed the term "residential" with "dwellings" to conform with the Township's definitions section of the Ordinance. Mr. Taylor also said that he feels on Table IV-B, all of the setbacks should be the same in both the "LDR" and "MDR" zoning districts. He said this ties into what some of the peoples' concerns are regarding the size of the building envelope. Mr. Rouggie asked if this would change the overall density; Mr. Taylor said it would not.

Mr. Slagle passed out copies of an email he sent to Mr. Robb, Mr. Curti, and Solicitor Irv Firman regarding his opinions of what the major concerns of the public are that he summarized from past hearings. These include: reduced density,

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preserving open space, encouraging single-family development, preserving neighborhood consistency , encouraging innovative housing, and preserving trees. He said he believes that the proposed changes to the current PRD section of the Zoning Ordinance takes these all into consideration.

Mr. Rouggie asked if the various concerns and questions that have been gathered tonight could be put together into a document so the Planning Commission Members would have time to consider them before taking any further action. Mr. Robb agreed this would be a good idea. He said a lot of good points were raised at tonight's meeting. He said he could meet with Mr. Slagle and Mr. Curti and go over the memos, charts, etc. that were submitted, as well as the comments that were made, and they could put together a summary. Mr. Rouggie said he feels that would be good idea and give them more time to consider the ideas that the residents made. Mr. Robb said a lot of time-lines are set by the State statutes.

A discussion was held, and the Planning Commission Members agreed it would be good to get the ideas put together, and given to them in an outline form for consideration at their next meeting. Mr. Robb said there is no need for them to "formally" make a recommendation to "table" any action at tonight's meeting. Mr. Taylor asked how long he feels it will take to get everything together. Mr. Robb said as long as it takes to look at the bigger picture as a whole. Mr. Rouggie agreed that this is a good place to start.

CORRESPONDENCE

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

Each Commission Member received a copy of the Planning Commission's Letter of Recommendation sent to the Board of Supervisors, which was written as a result of the Commission's March 22, 2023 regular meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Geahry made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lachina, to adjourn the April 26, 2023, Planning Commission Regular Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Jacquelyn A. Rouggie
Recording Secretary

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