TOWNSHIP OF INDIANA

PLANNING COMMISSION

APRIL 28, 2021

A 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 held at Indiana Township Town Hall, with limited individuals physically attending due to Corona Virus Pandemic concerns and the need for "social distancing", with the option of audience members attending the meeting by phone. This meeting was recorded on audio cassette.

APPROVED

ROLL CALL

The roll was called and Planning Commission Members present were David Geahry, Lisa Lachina, Pat Miller, Michael Rouggie, and Daniel Taylor. Also in attendance were Code Enforcement Officer Jeffrey S. Curti, Recording Secretary Jacquelyn Rouggie, Township Engineer Daniel Slagle from Nichols & Slagle Engineering, and Solicitor Katherine Janocsko with Tucker Arensberg.

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 24, 2021

Mr. Taylor made a motion, seconded by Mr. Miller, to approve the March 24, 2021, regular meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

REQUEST FOR ZONING MAP CHANGE

Board Members were presented with a request for a Zoning Map Change by Craft Pittsburgh USA Inc. for parcels they plan to acquire (known as Lot/Blocks #836-J-100, #835-M-55, #836-E-334, and #836-E-323), consisting of approximately 23.69 acres, which are located off of Bruno Drive. The properties are currently zoned "L/I - Light Industrial". They requested they be changed to "VR - Village Residential". The applicant for Craft Pittsburgh USA Louie Buordolone, as well as Dave Hager with PVE Engineering, were present.

Mr. Slagle said if the parcels were left zoned "L/I", they would be limited as to what they could do with the property. He also said he feels that a "VR - Village Residential" zoning would be a better fit for the area, which is mostly residential now. Also, there is no public sewage available for the residents of Bruno Drive, and if this is developed into a plan, it could bring public sewage much closer to those residents. Mr. Buordolone said they plan to work with the residents living there for their input.

Mr. Hager said the multiple properties total about 24 acres and span between Blue Run Road and Bruno Drive. He said although they are currently zoned "L/I", they are surrounded by a lot of residentially zoned properties. He said they would like

to develop the properties and build Single Family Homes. He said the current zoning of the land does not fit with the character of the existing neighborhood. He also said the area is not conducive for commercial traffic. He said they plan to have two points of access into the plan off of Bruno Drive. They are planning on building 51 homes. Mr. Hager showed the proposed drawing of the plan if they receive their zoning change request. Mr. Curti asked if there was any way they could move the southeast entrance over so it is not so close to the resident on Bruno Drive's current driveway. Mr. Hager said there is an existing creek in that area but will check with the PA DEP. Mr. Curti suggested they look into this when applying for their NPDES Permit. Mr. Hager said a 25' buffer is being provided. He said the main access into the plan will be near the Walnut Woods development. The road Mr. Curti is inquiring about is more like a secondary access. John Carson of 114 Bruno Drive said it is his driveway Mr. Curti is referring to. He asked why there could not be another access off of Blue Run Road instead. Mr. Hager said the steep grade in that area of the property prohibits an access point off of Blue Run Road. Mr. Buordolone said they will take this into consideration.

Ashley Munsch of 116 Bruno Drive asked about the two lots that are located on Blue Run Road, next to the former A.J. Silberman building. Mr. Buordolone said they do not own them. Oscar Masci of 355 Bethany Drive said he has concerns about traffic in the area. He feels a lot of traffic into the plan may come through the nearby village in Indianola, then proceed down Bruno Drive, instead of using Blue Run Road, thus creating a lot more traffic on Bruno Drive. Mr. Masci also noted there is no public sewage available on Bruno Drive. Mr. Hager said they do not plan to use septic systems for the homes; they will be tying into the public sewage system. Mr. Masci said he does not think it would be fair to make people on Bruno Drive pay to tie into the public sewers if they do not wish to do so. Mr. Curti said during their advisory meeting with Craft that the sewer issues were discussed. The plan could enable those that want public sewage to be able to tap in at a reasonable fee since the new lines would be close to the existing homes.

Mr. Slagle reviewed his letter dated April 22, 2021 regarding the request for the Zoning Change. Mr. Rouggie asked if the zoning change is granted, the next step would be to submit a subdivision plan. Mr. Slagle answered yes. Tonight's only consideration is regarding their request to change the zoning of the properties to "VR - Village Residential", not the development of the properties. Mr. Slagle asked if they are proposing a multi-subdivision or a Planned Residential Development (PRD). Mr. Buordolone said a multi-subdivision. Mr. Slagle noted no Public Hearings are needed for multi-subdivisions, like they are for PRD's. Mr. Rouggie asked if there have been any similar proposals such as this submitted to change properties to Village Residential. Mr. Slagle said the Goeller property Zoning Change request on Saxonburg Boulevard that was submitted last month is similar, but they only requested a change of a single parcel that they already own being changed to an "LDR".

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Mr. Rouggie asked if there were any comments from the public, either by those in attendance or those attending remotely. Ms. Hertweck of 115 Berryhill Drive asked if by changing the zoning of a property if there are any legal concerns. Ms. Janoscko said she was not sure of the question. Ms. Hertweck said she meant could precedents be set if this request is approved. Ms. Janoscko said these types of requests are handled in a "case-by-case" basis.

Ms. Lachina made a motion, seconded by Mr. Taylor, recommending approval of the Zoning Map Change Request by Craft Pittsburgh USA Inc. Motion carried unanimously.

REQUEST FOR ZONING MAP CHANGE

Board Members were presented with a request for a Zoning Map Change by CZ Franklin LLC for parcels they plan to acquire (known as Lot/Blocks #1084-A-111, #1084-A-71, #1084-A-189, and #1084-A-194), consisting of approximately 30.2 acres, which are located off of Little Deer Creek Road, along the West Deer border. The properties are currently zoned "RE - Residential Estate". They requested they be changed to "VR - Village Residential". Frank Zappala and Patrick Malone from CZ Franklin LLC were present.

Mr. Zappala showed a drawing of where the properties they would eventually like to develop are located. He said they are planning to use Ryan Homes as the builder, and their development is very similar to Richmont Estates, which is currently being built off of Rich Hill Road. He said the properties are currently owned by Joshua Kratsa. Mr. Zappala said they were originally going to ask for the zoning to be changed to "MDR - Medium Density Residential" and build 42 homes. However, they now feel "VR - Village Residential" is a better fit, and would like to build 61 homes. They are only proposing Single Family Dwellings. Mr. Zappala passed out copies of the layout of the potential development. He said they plan to leave four (4) acres undeveloped on adjacent property that is owned by Mr. Kratsa's sister.

Mr. Curti said when they had an advisory meeting with Mr. Zappala, they only discussed 42 homes. Mr. Taylor said changing the zoning from "RE" to "VR" is quite a change. He asked what the advantage is to the Township by making this change. Mr. Zappala said there are not many residential homes in this area of the Township. He said the minimum lot size in an "RE" zoning district is 2 acres and he does not think such large lots are a good fit for this rural area. He said by changing to "VR", a more community feel would be created. He said financially and economically it would be better to have the zoning changed to "VR" rather than "MDR", as they originally planned to ask for. Mr. Taylor said there are no other lots zoned "VR" adjoining these parcels. Mr. Zappala pointed out there are no "MDR" zoned lots either. Mr. Taylor questioned whether this is "spot-zoning". Mr. Zappala asked what is considered "spot-zoning". Ms. Janocsko clarified that "spot-zoning" is usually when only one lot's zoning is changed and it is only beneficial to the owner. She

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said this application would not be considered “spot-zoning” because it is four parcels that they intend to develop into a community and blend with similar homes in the area. Mr. Taylor said “VR” allows single-family, two-family, and multi-family homes. He does not feel the intent of the Township’s Comprehensive Plan is to have these types of homes here; the properties around them are mostly zoned “Industrial”. Mr. Rouggie said he is concerned about changing the zoning to “VR”; he feels it is too dense because the minimum lot size is only 5,000 sq.ft. Mr. Taylor expressed concerns because right now, they are saying they plan to build only 61 lots. But, if the zoning is changed, and they change their mind, they could put in a lot more lots, including multi-family dwellings. Mr. Zappala said this is not a “high-end” area of the Township, especially being adjacent to a boney dump as well as industrial zoned properties. He also said a “sports complex” was recently built just down the road in West Deer Township. He said this is not a good area for “estate-style” large homes. He feels smaller homes on smaller lots would be a much better fit for this rural area.

Mr. Slagle said during their advisory meeting with Mr. Curti, they proposed the zoning to be changed to “MDR”, which has a minimum lot size of ½ acre. He agreed “RE” zoning is not good for this area either with the 2 acre minimum lot size. He said he feels the whole area should be zoned either “MDR” or “VR”. He said he feels the “RE” zoning was an error in this area when the Zoning Map was originally created. He said most of the homes along Little Deer Creek Road are on small lots. Mr. Slagle said if the proposed development comes in as a Planned Residential Development, and the zoning is changed to “MDR”, then they could bring in up to about 90 homes. He said the smaller lots would better fit the concept of a PRD. He said across the road, the land is all strip-mined. He recommended the zoning be changed to “MDR” instead of “VR”.

Mr. Zappala said their intent is not to put in as many homes as they can. He said a PRD would be permissible because they do meet the minimum lot area of 10 acres that is required to submit a plan as a PRD. Mr. Slagle said in a PRD, a 25' buffer is required around the exterior of a development. He said the lot setbacks in the Zoning Ordinance would be a nice fit as well. The Board discussed the advantage of the land being re-zoned as an “MDR”, and submitting the plan as a PRD instead of a multi-family subdivision. Mr. Slagle said he feels the PRD concept and re-zoning the property as an “MDR” zoning district is a good idea.

Mr. Zappala suggested their plan be “tabled” tonight so they could do more research into the “MDR” zoning, and submitting as a PRD plan. Mr. Slagle suggested they could have another advisory meeting with himself and Mr. Curti to explore their options. Mr. Geahry noted there are 2 existing million dollar homes nearby right now. Mr. Curti said he feels the area is not conducive to having a “multi-million dollar home” development in this rural area of the Township.

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Mr. Rouggie asked if their were any comments from the audience. Chris Capone of 3606 Windsor Court said it seems odd to change the zoning to "VR" because there is nothing in the area that is like a village. Mr. Curti noted that PRD's have a Public Hearing requirement but multi-subdivisions do not. Mr. Taylor said he likes the idea to see if a PRD would be a better fit. Mr. Zappala said he is in favor of having the plan tabled tonight so other options could be explored. Ms. Hertweck asked what kind of impact the traffic would have with the tunnel located just down the road on Little Deer Creek Road. Mr. Curti said the tunnel has been there for an extremely long time and is owned by a railroad company; there is no way it can be modified. Planning Commission Members agreed the tunnel would not cause any issues. Beth Spatz of 436 Church Lane said she does not feel this area of the Township fits the idea of a "village"; she said she thinks a village is more of a place with shops, cafes, walking areas, etc. Mr. Taylor pointed out that "VR - Village Residential" is simply a term; it does not mean that an actual village-type community needs to be created. Mr. Curti said this property is not big enough for such a concept. Mr. Slagle read the definition of a PRD from the Township's Zoning Ordinance, and he said it does cover anything like shops, parks, walking areas, etc. Mr. Taylor said if you read the "uses" permitted in "VR" or "MDR" zoned areas, shops and other types of places suggested by Ms. Spatz are not even currently permitted in these areas.

Mr. Taylor made a motion, seconded by Mr. Geahry, recommending tabling the Zoning Map Change Request by CZ Franklin, LLC so further options could be explored. Motion carried unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE:

NEWLY ADOPTED SALDO PUBLIC COMMENTS

Commission Members were presented with copies of comments received about proposed changes to the newly adopted SALDO that were submitted. Mr. Taylor asked if a discussion is going to be held tonight about them. Mr. Rouggie said he thought they were given to them for discussion at a future meeting. Mr. Curti said he has met with Mr. Slagle twice to go over and consider the suggested changes. He said they hope to incorporate the ones they feel are necessary, and to have a "red-lined" version of the updated SALDO for the Planning Commission to review at a future meeting. Mr. Slagle said they may have something together by the next meeting. Mr. Taylor said he would like to have time to review the document for longer than a week before a meeting. Chris Capone asked if the intent is to do one amendment. He said he hopes all comments are considered, especially trees, streets, neighborhoods, etc. Mr. Curti said they are considering the comments submitted by Mr. Capone, as well as the three other documents they have received. Mr. Curti said they hope to take everything into consideration and have one final, updated document. Mr. Capone said he would be happy to privately meet with them to discuss the comments he suggested.

APPROVED

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 24, 2021 regular meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Miller made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lachina, to adjourn the April 28, 2021, Planning Commission Regular Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Jacquelyn A. Rouggie, Recording Secretary

APPROVED