TOWNSHIP OF INDIANA

PLANNING COMMISSION

JULY 24, 2024

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

The roll was called and Planning Commission Members present were Peter Blume, Kevin McKeegan, Preston Moore, and Daniel Taylor. Michael Rouggie 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 *(arriving at 6:10 pm)*, and Township Solicitor Irving Firman, Esq. from Tucker Arensberg *(leaving at 7:29 pm)*.

APPROVED

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 22, 2024

Mr. Blume made a motion, seconded by Mr. McKeegan, to approve the May 22, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

REQUEST FOR ZONING MAP AMENDMENT BY MPF MANAGEMENT LLC FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 920 ROUTE 910 (Block/Lot No. 836-E-207)

Board Members were once again presented with a Zoning Map Revision Request by MPF Management, LLC, to change the zoning of a parcel, known as Block/Lot# 836-E-207, located at 920 Route 910, from "O/C" Office Flex Commercial to "L/I" Light Industrial. The 59.87 acres parcel is currently owned by D&D Supply Inc. It is located on the eastern side of Route 910, at its intersection with the Westbound side of the PA Turnpike to Field View Lane. It is approximately 1,000' south of Emmerling Community Park, adjacent to Deer Creek, and the Rachel Carson Trail. Attorney Jake Polochak of MPF Management, LLC, was present.

Mr. Polochak from MPF said they were given adequate time to get the studies done as requested by the Planning Commission at their May 22nd meeting; however they decided not to have the studies done at this time. Therefore, they had nothing further to submit. He said at this point, they are simply asking for a "yes" or "no" recommendation from the Planning Commission for their request for the Zoning Map Change for the property located at 920 Route 910. Mr. Blume asked if they planned to submit anything else. Mr. Polochak said they do not, nor do they have any additional comments to add to everything that has already been said at the previous meetings.

Mr. McKeegan asked if there were any comments from the public. Mr. Taylor rephrased the request and asked if there were any NEW comments that the public would like to add since the previous meetings.

Nancy Merritt of 512 Sandra Lane, read excerpts from the Township of Indiana's Comprehensive Plan, which was done jointly with West Deer Township. She said since 2010, there has been a decline in population in Indiana Township. She also said that she feels permitting fracking will not encourage new residents to want to move into Indiana Township.

Beth Vukmir of 110 Deer Run Lane, said she appreciated the Planning Commission asking MPF to do the various reports and studies. But, she said since MPR never did them, she hopes the Planning Commission will take this into consideration when making their vote tonight.

Vanessa Lynch of 3726 Saxonburg Blvd., said by MPF failing to have the studies performed as requested by the Planning Commission, it suggests that MPF does not care about the Planning Commission's request.

Bob Leininger of 214 Scarborough Drive, said at the last Planning Commission meeting, he felt a lot of good information was discussed. But, he agreed that since MPF did not do what was asked of them by the Planning Commission, that a denial should be given.

Michael Quinn of 111 Eisele Road, said that since the last Planning Commission meeting, he physically walked the property and he said it took him less than 15 minutes to do, even at his older age. He said it is scary that a well is proposed to be located so close to residential homes.

Mr. McKeegan asked the Solicitor if reasons need to be given to the Board of Supervisors as to why the Commission feels they should approve or deny the proposal. Solicitor Firman said with Land Development proposals they must. However, with a Zoning Change request, they can simply recommend an approval or denial without conditions.

Mr. McKeegan said they are not making a recommendation in regard to a request for Oil and Gas Drilling. They are only considering MPF's change in zoning. He said this was all that was submitted by MPF. He said they only suggested what could be permitted if their requested change was approved.

Mr. McKeegan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Taylor, to DENY the request for a zoning change by MPF Management, LLC for the property located at 920 Route 910 from "O/C-Office Flex Commercial" to "L/I-Light Industrial" based on the absence of the requested studies to document the inability to develop the site as a commercial facility. Motion carried unanimously.

Solicitor Firman reminded everyone that the Planning Commission is only a recommending body to the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors vote to make a final decision on any applications.

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MS4 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM UPDATE

Engineer Dan Slagle said that MS4 stands for "Municipal Storm Sewer System". He explained that about 12 years ago, the DEP began implementing Wastewater Programs to help control what is discharged into the public Stormwater Systems. These items include rotted leaves, oil, soaps, chemicals, etc.

He said implementation of this program includes educating the Public to be smart and take into consideration what they put into the storm sewers, such as by using biodegradable soaps and chemicals, cleaning up after their pets, etc. This helps to ensure a healthier living environment for all residents. Mr. Slagle said the Township must document how they encourage and educate the public, such as by posting information in the Township's Newsletters, putting information on the Township website, and promoting the use of Waste Management's Household Hazardous Waste Program, which is provided to residents for no additional fee.

Mr. Slagle said the Township must submit a yearly "MS4 Annual Status Report" to the DEP. He said this years' report is due on September 30, 2024.

There was a discussion amongst the Commission Members and the audience about various ways to help reduce unwanted items from entering into the storm system. Mr. Taylor suggested that environmental friendly fertilizer be used for residential gardens and plantings. Mr. Slagle said presentations can also be made to students in the local schools. A resident suggested that he can be contacted by Mr. Slagle to set this up. Various ways to help educate the public were discussed.

Mr. McKeegan asked if the MS4 Program is the same as to what is being required to be done to upgrade the ALCOSAN and AVJSA sewage plants. Mr. Slagle said it is not; they are two entirely different projects. Mr. McKeegan asked if the Township sewage flows into the ALCOSAN sewage plant; Mr. Slagle said only a small portion. However, he said the majority of the Township's public sewers are serviced by Deer Creek Drainage Basin Authority (DCDBA), which flows into the AVJSA system. Mr McKeegan asked if there are any combined sewer systems within the Township; Mr. Slagle said there are not. Mr. Slagle said the recent requirements to the Public Sewage Systems have cost millions of dollars by Authorities to upgrade their sewer systems to comply with the EPA/DEP requirements. This resulted in large increases to resident's public sewage bills.

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

Mr. Taylor suggested they commence in reviewing the PRD Section where they left off at their last meeting, which was Section 403(D): Buffer Areas.

Mr. Slagle suggested that thought be given to the minimum size of a PRD. He said right now, a parcel of land must be at least 10 acres in size to be considered for a PRD. He said this can be increased, and added that most PRD's already existing in the Township exceed this size. He said PRD's are like creating "small village" concept within an area. Mr. McKeegan said PRD's also help preserve un-developable land. Also, the required buffers promote more common open space since they cannot be built in.

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Other areas of the PRD Ordinance were discussed, and suggestions were made as to what should be kept and what needed to be changed. Having "overflow parking areas" within developments was discussed, since many homes have more vehicles than they do parking spots. Plus, this would allow for additional parking areas for residents, as well as their guests. Mr. McKeegan urged that Traffic Studies be done for each development.

The Commission continued discussing the current Ordinance and updates that could be made to make for the best use of the land within a PRD. Various studies were discussed, as well as the clearing of land and keeping matures trees where they can. The procedures for Applications and the need for Public Hearings were discussed. Recording requirements with Allegheny County was discussed, and it was determined that it should remain up to a Developer to ensure that an approved Plan is properly recorded with Allegheny County, as it is now. Other minor verbiage changes were considered.

Mr. Slagle handed out a sheet entitled "Typical Utility Locations" from the Township's Construction Standard for review. He also said suggestions should be considered from other reference materials that have been submitted since the time the re-write began, especially because comparisons were made as to what Indiana Township has in its Ordinance versus that of surrounding municipalities. Mr. Slagle said the Tables regarding Permitted Densities and Bulk Area Requirements in the "RE", "LDR", and "MDR" zoned areas, where PRD's are permitted, need to be taken into consideration, thus allowing for smart development.

Consideration into giving "bonuses" to Developers was discussed, and how there could be "give and take" situations given depending upon each Development and its uniqueness, such as the slopes of land in unbuildable areas. The concept of Multiple Developments versus PRD's was also discussed. A resident from Blue Run Road had concerns about buffer areas. Resident Chris Capone said he took into consideration a lot of factors, and did a lot of calculations as to what is permitted in other surrounding municipalities. The minimum parcel size needed for a PRD to be developed was once again discussed. It was the general consensus that tracts of land be larger than the 10 acre minimum requirement to be considered for permitting the PRD concept to be used rather than a Multiple Subdivision. Mr. Slagle said they need to remember to take into consideration what requirements are allowed for in the PA MPC.

A discussion was held regarding how PRD's can help bring down the price-point of building new homes within the Township. Consideration also needs to be given to promote growth within the Township.

Mr. McKeegan said he feels the main topics that need to be finalized include the percentage of Common Open Space, what should be included/excluded within Open Space areas, along with the size limits, setbacks, and allowable densities within a development, and to also consider increasing the minimum size permitted for PRD's to be increased.

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Jon Neumann of 222 Chatham Lane, thanked the Planning Commission for all of the hard work they have been putting into the re-writing of the PRD Section of the Township Ordinance. He said there are big differences as to what could be affected by 10 acre developments vs. 100 acre developments. He said he feels open space areas are very important as well. He said the "market" will work out what is affordable in a community as far as new housing is concerned. But, he said he does not feel that PRD's are the way to encourage more residents to want to move into the Township.

Matthew Viverette of 102 Creigmore Court, said at the last meeting, the Zoning Map that was shown on the Township's website was out-of-date and did not include the various amendments that were made since it's adoption in 2007. Mr. Curti assured the audience that the Township Engineer is working on an updated version of the Map to include any amendments that were previously approved. Mr. Moore suggested that the Township consider growth when reviewing developments. He said families with children need to be able to afford new homes too. Mr. Neumann said it is the Fox Chapel Area School District that attracts home buyers to move into the area. He said if new homeowners need to start out in other, lower income communities within the School District, then they may have to do that until they can afford to move into homes located in Indiana Township.

Further discussion of the changes to the Ordinance were concluded for the evening.

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 May 22, 2024 regular meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McKeegan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blume, to adjourn the July 24, 2024, Planning Commission Regular Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Jacquelyn A. Rouggie
Recording Secretary

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