# TOWNSHIP OF INDIANA

# PLANNING COMMISSION

**SEPTEMBER 25, 2024**

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

Mr. Taylor welcomed newly appointed Planning Commission Member Michael Calandra from District #2 (Indianola) to the Commission.

The roll was called and Planning Commission Members present were Peter Blume, Michael Calandra, Kevin McKeegan, Preston Moore, 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 *(arrived at 6:13 pm)*, and Solicitor Irving Firman with Tucker Arensberg.

It was noted that due to the recent resignation of Chairman Michael Rouggie, the Commission Members need to reorganize.

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## REORGANIZATION

***Mr. Blume made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moore, to appoint Daniel Taylor as the new Chairman for 2024. Motion carried unanimously.***

***Mr. Blume made a motion, seconded by Mr. Taylor, to appoint Kevin McKeegan as the new Vice Chairman for 2024. Motion carried unanimously.***

It was noted that Peter Blume will continue to serve as the Board Secretary for 2024.

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 28, 2024

***Mr. McKeegan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moore, to approve the August 28, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. Motion carried, with Mr. Calandra abstaining.***

## DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

### SAXONBURG BLVD SCHOOL - SUBDIVISION

Commission Members were presented with an application to subdivide a parcel consisting of 2.0005 acres, known as Tax Parcel #834-D-313, into two lots. The parcel is located along Saxonburg Blvd. about ½ mile south of the intersection of Route 910 and Saxonburg Blvd. The property is zoned “VR” Village Residential.

Mr. Taylor noted that prior to tonight's meeting, the Township received a notice from the Applicant's representative, Project Manager Robyn Brady from Hampton Technical Associates, Inc., that the applicant requested that the Plan be TABLED until next month's Planning Commission meeting, due to not having time to adequately address the issues that were in Engineer Dan Slagle's review letter dated August 2, 2024.

Mr. McKeegan said due to a business conflict of interest with the Applicant, that he would like to recuse himself from voting on any motions made on this application.

***Mr. Blume made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moore, recommending TABLING the "SAXONBURG BLVD SCHOOL - SUBDIVISION", based upon the Applicant's request. Motion carried, with Mr. McKeegan abstaining.***

**FREDERICK FARMS PRD (PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT) - Tentative Approval**

Commission Members were presented with a plan consisting of combining two parcels (22.45 acres total) and re-subdividing them into a Development consisting of 32 single-family houses. The parcels are located north of Saxonburg Boulevard and east of Harts Run Road, near the intersection with Mallard Drive. The properties are zoned "LDR" Low Density Residential. Alberto Jarquin and Pat Cooper from Gateway Engineers, as well as Grant Miller with Maronda Homes, were present to represent the Applicant, Maronda Homes LLC.

Solicitor Firman said that Mr. Cooper submitted a signed "Extension/Waiver" on behalf of Maronda Homes, LLC prior to the meeting asking for an extension until November 13, 2024 for consideration by the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Cooper also said they are asking that the Planning Commission "table" their Application until their next meeting. He said they just received the review letter from the Township Engineer Dan Slagle, dated September 20, 2024, yesterday and they would like more time to address his comments.

However, Mr. Cooper said they would still like to give an informal presentation of what they are proposing. He said Maronda Homes would like to subdivide a 22 acre parcel into 32 single family homes. He said they are applying for the development to be submitted as a "PRD". He said there would be around 1.4 units/acre. He said they plan to leave about 50% of the plan to be Open Space. He said any grading done will be minimal.

Mr. McKeegan thanked Mr. Cooper for the extension they granted to allow time for the proposed plan to be reviewed properly. A discussion was held about the required time restrictions for a plan to be reviewed prior to having a Public Meeting. Mr. McKeegan said he would encourage Developers to present a "Pre-Application" to the Planning Commission first, prior to any public comment period being held. Mr. Curti said Developers do have a "Pre-Application Meeting" meeting with himself and the Engineer prior to any developments being formally submitted. Mr. McKeegan said this Application will follow the criteria in the Ordinance that is currently in place for PRD's. He said in the current Zoning Ordinance, it is

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suggested that a variety of housing units be encouraged to allow for better land development. Mr. McKeegan said this does not seem to be the case in this development since it will be all Single Family Dwellings (SFD). Mr. Cooper said they are proposing detached dwellings, similar to the nearby Hartwood Meadows development. Mr. McKeegan asked if they considered submitting the plan as a "straight" multiple subdivision, rather than a PRD. Mr. Cooper said they did, but a massive amount of grading of the land would be needed to meet the requirements of a regular subdivision. He said by submitting as a PRD, they will be able to preserve more open space. Mr. McKeegan asked if any "Pittsburgh Red Clay Beds" were encountered during their studies; Mr. Cooper said none were found. Mr. McKeegan said it appears that about 384 trees will be removed. He asked if there will be entrance trees; Mr. Cooper said there will be, as required by the Township's SALDO. Mr. Cooper said they plan to keep as many existing trees as they can. A discussion was held about the proposed road lengths to the cul-de-sacs. Mr. Curti said it will be about 1,100' to the first street from Saxonburg Boulevard. Mr. Blume pointed out this development is over the 10 acre minimum size that they are considering to be changed in the new PRD section of the Ordinance. He also said they are also providing more than the amount of open space required. Mr. Taylor questioned the 25' buffer area around the exterior of the property. He ***said*** Lots #101 and #132 at the entrance appear to ***be*** included as part of the 25' buffer area. Mr. Taylor said he is concerned in the future that lot owners will not realize ***that a*** part of their lot is located within the buffer zone. Mr. Cooper said this can be adjusted, if needed. Mr. Taylor said no lots should located within the buffer zone. Mr. McKeegan said restrictions from building in the buffer zone could be added to the recorded covenants of the plan. Mr. Cooper noted that the area near the streams is very sloped.

Mr. Taylor asked what the "target audience" is for the plan. Mr. Miller from Maronda Homes said very similar to the Hartwood Meadows plan, which is geared toward families. He said the price point will be from the low $500k's to the high $700k's. Mr. Taylor asked if pull off areas are being allocated for children waiting for school buses. Mr. Cooper showed the three spots. Mr. Taylor said he feels more space will need to be provided. It was suggested that "no parking signs" could be installed. Mr. McKeegan asked where the stormwater will drain to; Mr. Cooper said towards the stream area. Mr Cooper showed the area where the high-tension power lines exist, and also said that Maronda plans to grant access to the Rachel Carson Trail to continue to extend throughout the development. Mr. Curti asked if the easement shown for the sewers is for a pump station. Mr. McKeegan asked if a Traffic Study will be done. Mr. Curti said one is not required because no more than 100 peak hourly trips are anticipated. Mr. Cooper said Saxonburg Boulevard is a State-owned roadway, and a Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP) will need to be approved by PennDOT for the entrance into the plan. He said all site distance requirements will be met.

A discussion was held about the overall plan, as well as the items listed in the Engineer's review letter. Mr. Cooper said they plan to submit more detailed drawings at the next meeting. Mr. Slagle said letters from the public utilities ability to service the plan will also be needed.

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***Mr. McKeegan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blume, recommending TABLING the "FREDERICK FARMS PRD - Tentative" plan, based upon the Applicant's request. Motion carried unanimously.***

Mr. Taylor asked if their were any comments from the audience. Peter Nigra said he lives across the street from the entrance into the plan on Saxonburg Boulevard. He said he had concerns about lighting. Mr. Taylor said lighting will be shielded. Mr. Slagle said this is not a requirement of the Township Ordinance, but it can be addressed in the HOA documents. Mr. Nigra asked about street lights at the entrance. He showed the location of his own driveway on the plan. Mr. Cooper said his driveway is about 150' from the proposed entrance into the plan. Mr. Nigra said he also had concerns about parking and traffic at the entrance into the plan. Mr. Nigra asked if he could get copies of the Engineer's letter, as well as a copy of the proposed drawings of the plan. Mr. Firman said he could submit a formal "RTK Request", or he could view all documents at the Township Building during regular business hours.

Chris Capone of 3606 Windsor Court, said he feels the Applicant did a nice job on the plans. He said the Buffer Zone is marked as a "Perimeter Setback" rather than a Buffer Zone. He said he feels the open space areas should be separate, and owned and maintained by the HOA. He also discussed concerns about the drainage features. Mr. Curti said the area is already bare, and sloped so the water will naturally run downhill. Mr. Capone said a 50' area is shown for the pull-over area. He said he resides in the nearby Hartwood Meadows plan, and said on average, there are at least 5-6 cars waiting at the bus stop area; he said traffic can get very congested at times. He asked that enough space be allocated for off-street parking. Mr. Capone said he likes that the developer is permitting the Rachel Carson Trail to run throughout the plan. Mr. Capone said there are (4) Stormwater Ponds being proposed, which seem to be a lot. Mr. Cooper said they felt the same way, but they must comply with DEP requirements. A discussion was held regarding Rain Gardens versus Detention Basins, as well as the effect of removing trees.

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## DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

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

Mr. Taylor said he had sent Commission Members an email with some typos he had back on September 11, 2024, which need to be incorporated into the current working document.

Commission Members said they feel the minimum tree size requirement is still an item that needs to be addressed. Mr. Slagle said the current "Conservation and Environmental Fund" fee is adequate. Mr. Taylor said he prefers PRD's rather than straight Multiple Subdivisions. He said PRD's provide more open space than standard developments. The total cost of the development is a big issue. Mr. McKeegan said "trade-off's" need to be considered too.

Mr. Calandra asked what types of trees are being considered. Mr. Taylor said 8" in diameter; Mr. Calandra said he is comfortable with that. Mr. Taylor said certain trees, like pines, can be scraggly, if they are only 6". The Board Members agreed unanimously that the minimum tree size should be 8" in diameter.

Mr. Slagle handed out a “PRD Beta Testing” sheet that an employee from his firm, who was not familiar with the Township’s proposed revisions, did as a comparison on four recent PRD’s built in the Township. It compared each Development as a PRD vs. a straight Subdivision. Mr. Slagle said in the end, when comparing the new re-written PRD’s vs. Straight Subdivision, that the number of units were very similar.

Table IV-A, regarding PRD Permitted Densities were discussed. It was suggested that a paragraph be added stating that except for single family homes, no dwelling unit type may exceed 25% of the total number of units (as previously discussed). The concept of giving developers “Bonus Units” in lieu of other trade offs was once again discussed. Things such as providing picnic areas, walking trails, etc. could all be considered.

Commission Members continued discussing PRD’s versus straight Subdivisions. Mr. Slagle said the last page of his “Beta” examples compared Net Areas, Buffer Areas, and Open Space. He said the example was based on a 10 acre PRD; Members agreed that they still feel the minimum PRD size should be at least 20 acres or more. Mr. Slagle reminded Commission Members that the Township cannot charge both the Recreational Fee to Developers and require recreational areas, playgrounds, etc.

Commission Members discussed that a cap should be set at 20% for Open Space. Mr. Taylor said he feels wetlands, steep slopes, etc. should be allowed to be considered as part of the Open Space.

Mr. Slagle said the initial idea of the concept of a PRD’s was to create a small “village” within a municipality, with its owns stores, community centers, etc. However, PRD’s do not follow that type of concept anymore. They are used more to provide visual buffers from public open space areas, which is appealing to the public. Commission Members agreed they feel commercial areas, such as shops, etc., should be kept out of PRD’s; they should be strictly residential.

Emily Gouwens of 54 Ridgeland Drive, thanked the Planning Commission Members for the hard work they have put in on re-writing the current Section of the Zoning Ordinance regarding PRD’s. She said density is a key concern to residents. But, she said ultimately, Township’s are not required to permit PRD’s, so she feels they should be removed from the Ordinance entirely.

Mr. McKeegan asked what steps need to taken from this point. Members said they feel Developers should be asked to present their future Developments as a “straight” development versus a PRD, to show what the Township gains from it being a straight development instead of allowing it to be a PRD. Commission agreed that PRD’s can provide for smaller lot sizes, but they also preserve more

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open land areas, streams, natural features, etc. They also agreed they liked using the "bonus" or "trade off" concept. Due to the steep terrain and slopes of the land in the Township, the concept of PRD's still need to be an option for potential developers; there just needs to be limitations. Mr. Curti and Mr. Firman agreed they do not like the "Bonus" idea. They feel the baseline needs to be more encouraging. A discussion was held amongst everyone. The Buffer Area of the Ordinance was discussed and everyone was in agreement to how it now reads.

Nettie Owens of 109 Bruno Drive, said the environmental impact needs to be taken into consideration, as well as PRD's disturbing other things, rather than just giving an area more open space. Mr. Taylor said the Township is limited on what they can do by the Township's SALDO.

The Commission Members agreed that some more "fine-tuning" needs to be done, but they are pretty much complete with their reviews and suggested changes. 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 August 28, 2024 regular meeting.

## ADJOURNMENT

***Mr. Blume made a motion, seconded by Mr. McKeegan, to adjourn the September 25, 2024, Planning Commission Regular Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.***

The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

***Jacquelyn A. Rouggie***
***Recording Secretary***

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