



February 10, 2016

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Evans called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. Present for the Planning Commission were Messrs. Evans, Newlin, Caggiano, and Stoll. Also present was Steve English of Mr. Skypala's office, Assistant Township Manager Lee Milligan, Township Engineer Mike Coyne, Geoff Grace of Grace Planning Associates, and Traffic Engineer Ken O'Brien.

Agenda Items: Approval of Minutes-January 13, 2016 & January 27, 2016, McCauley Assoc Plan#6-033 022-1111(ZTA).

Minutes -

Mr. Caggiano made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stoll to approve the minutes from January 13, 2016 as distributed. Vote; Unanimous.

Mr. Caggiano made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stoll to approve the minutes from January 27, 2016 as amended. Vote; Unanimous.

Mr. Evans asked Mr. Milligan to stand up and then began to thank him from the Planning Commission members for his years of service and how they appreciated all the hard work and dedication he has put in to help the Township. Enjoy your retirement.

Subdivision/Land Development Reviews

1). McCauley Assoc Plan#6-033 022-1111(ZTA), 172 Hopwood Road, 44 Lots – 21.88Acres, No Expiration Date.

Present for this discussion was Mr. John T. Dooley, Atty. for Applicant, and Mr. Christopher Canavan of w.b. Homes, inc., Applicant, and Mr. Strahorn of w.b. Homes, inc., Applicant.

Also in attendance is Mr. Baldassari of Furey & Baldassari, P.C.

Mr. Milligan verified review letters were received. M.C.P.C. of February 5, 2016, Grace Planning Associates of January 21, 2016, McMahon Associates of January 21, 2016, and Gilmore Associates of January 21, 2016.

Mr. Dooley started with an overview of the concept plan they brought with them tonight. The project is located on 22 acres and is Zoned R1. It is also located on both sides of Hopwood Road that has some steep slopes and a stream that runs through one side. He is turning the conversation over to Mr. Canavan for a better description and any questions.

Mr. Canavan explained that this parcel is on both the North and South side of Hopwood Road and is to the west of the Route 29 intersection near Providence Town Center. It is also enveloped in R1 zoning but very close to multiple other R uses.

The south eastern part of the parcel has a lot of steep slopes and the stream. They understand the Township would like to see a lot of that parcel stay as Open Space. This project would need proposed relief to make these improvements viable. This section of Hopwood Road is located in kind of a rural section, but would need to be widened and have sidewalks put in. They would also like to straighten out some of the bad curves in this project on Hopwood Road.

Mr. Canavan described the type of Carriage Home units they would like to build for this project.

They would generally have 2 car garages, 2200-3200 sq ft., 3-4 bedrooms and full basements. They are not considered Townhouses. They are much larger and more open. They will be designed to be maintenance free. They have a similar product in Thorndale Development, Towamencin Township.

The concept is different than the zoning, we've submitted a Text Amendment to the R1 to allow for this type of use.

We've been through all 4 Review Letters, understands the concepts made by the staff, they feel they can address all items in the letters if the Township is willing to allow this type of use in our Township.

Does different Zoning make sense, due to its unique nature and the traffic improvements that are necessary through here.
Otherwise, with a traditional plan, they wouldn't be able to afford the road improvements that are necessary on Hopwood Road.

There will need to be a full Traffic study done and full engineering to be provided later in development.

Mr. Canavan expressed their desires to fulfill the Townships needs as well as their own.

Mr. Evans asked if they've reviewed the extent of the improvements with the Engineer. Mr. Canavan said they had not-they were going off of the old By-Right plan, before the recession. They are willing to sit down with the Engineer's office and discuss. They also wanted to discuss softening the street curves on this project.

Mr. Evans expressed the fact that the need for the improvements to this road is one of the main areas of discussion and need regarding this project.

Mr. Canavan added to the conversation, before the homeowners made their comments, that the price point on these homes would be about \$450,000 to \$480,000.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS:

Mr. Matthew Wiernusz of 110 Shetland Way

Ever since there has been a Wawa-it has been bad trying to turn left on that road. Now adding another egress is going to make that worse.

At first the single family home project was going to put about 15 homes there...now they want to put about 40+ carriage homes.

It is 45mph at the present time-and that's with the bad curves...with the road improvements the speeds will just increase.

What can be done since Route 29 is a state road?

Mr. O'Brien added that before PennDot would allow a traffic signal they would need to meet volumes. Their current Traffic Study is about 10 years old-a new one is required. It would have to conclude if a signal is warranted. Once they conclude that a signal is warranted, can they accommodate a left turn lane. And they need to think about the condition of the 2 culverts-do they need to replace those as well.

Mr. Newlin expressed that Bechtel Road is probably the Townships #1 issue-Hopwood is #2.
He added that he lives in that neighborhood also-so he understands.

Ms. Linda Wiernusz of 110 Shetland Way

Another item to look at if Hopwood gets re-constructed in any way...when turning left onto Hopwood, it hooks back to the left (towards Route 113) and that is dangerous.

Mr. Evans asked if this area was in the Flood Zone.
Yes-it is.

Mr. Joe Bucara of 1715 Morgan Lane

Looking at all of the roads and egresses and cul-de-sacs on Hopwood Road before they get to Morgan Lane-now adding another egress on top of this in the middle of this curve will be dangerous, with the speed of this road.

Mr. Evans explained that this property is currently Zoned R1. They are trying to minimize the driveways.

Mr. Grace added that Single Family detached R1-each driveway would have its own egress out onto Hopwood Road potentially.

R2 there could be more shared driveways. It is a higher density and reduces the driveways. It is not a driving factor in changing the Zoning as far as he is concerned, but as a safety standpoint-yes.

Mr. Bill Harris of 113 Shetland Way

Mr. Harris asked the Planning Commission what the driving factor would be for approving this plan, Safety & Community-as it is today or an economic development factor. This land use will have a huge impact on his and all of their properties.

Mr. Grace tried to explain that if the Zoning Ordinance changes it doesn't only change for this parcel, it changes throughout the Township, not just on Hopwood Road-but everywhere. He doesn't make any decisions, he only advises.

The Board of Supervisors will decide on all of those factors.

Mr. Grace explained that the Board of Supervisors will probably take all of these factors

into consideration when making this decision.

Mr. Caggiano mentioned that he lives on Boro Line Road and has used Hopwood Road for the last 20+ years. He has also slid off that road in the winter more than once and ended up in the ditch he wants to see that road straightened and widened-we may not have a lot of impact on the intersection, but we do have impact on this road. From his perspective-if he can make that road safer that's what his concern is. The type of house isn't the driving factor; it's the safety and the improvements.

Mr. Evans added that they are all residents of the Township and they all travel on the Township roads. If they can initiate things for that and if different developments trigger key safety items from the Comprehensive Plan, then those are the issues we want to address.

If it stays R1, they can't put as many homes in-but they also can't put in as much towards road improvements.

Mr. Harris made the comment that he was impressed with what they were offering.

Mr. Bill Barclay of 1716 Morgan Lane

The strategic plan, the quality of life has been tremendous. I have trouble with this plan. This is like taking a square peg and putting it in a round hole.

Please consider rejecting this plan.

His wife was in a life altering accident on Route 29 and he feels this project will only increase the traffic and make it worse and more dangerous. It will change the character of the neighborhood.

The intersection of Hopwood Road and Route 29 is a state road and will be hard to work with.

Mr. Evans suggested they go through the letters.

Grace Planning Associates-

Mr. Grace said his review letter mainly went over buffers and amending the R1 Zoning to include townhouses.

Then he made a comment about the Montgomery County Planning Commission Letter regarding Flex Lotting to include R1.

This is possible-but it would take a lot of work.

Mr. Canavan said he knew this was just a start and was just looking for feedback tonight.

Mr. Grace explained his letter was in 2 sections, the first section was where the

Ordinance should go then the second was that if it did move forward as written then those are the changes he would like to see.

The R2 would also take some amending because it also doesn't allow townhouses. But it is closer to the lot size and density that they are asking for.

Mr. Canavan explained that they are requesting the Text Amendment to be 3 units to an acre within R1-This would be a whole new use within R1.

Mr. Evans questioned Mr. Milligan about how quickly townhouses were selling in Upper Providence.

Mr. Milligan answered that singles are selling very well, but townhouses are also selling well as long as they are not in age-restricted neighborhoods.

McMahon Associates-

Mr. O'Brien explained the main items in his review letter.

A Traffic Study was definitely needed. There were some minor comments and the previously discussed improvements on Hopwood Road. There are also some short term improvements that could be done.

Mr. O'Brien would also like to see sidewalks.

Mr. Grace added that he had discussions with Parks & Recs Director, Ms. Barker, and she would like to see a connecting trail or sidewalks from Anderson Farm Park.

Mr. Evans asked what the right of way is on Hopwood Road.
80 feet.

Gilmore Associates-

Mr. Coyne addressed his letter saying there was nothing major. They will need sewer EDU's and the sewer comes in down Hopwood towards Bonnie Brook.

Mr. Caggiano now presented his concept suggestion.

He understands they are sensitive to the number of units compared to being able to do road improvements, but he is also trying to move a few of the packs of houses since they were so close to the back line, close to the other current residents.

The road is disjointed, but if a few sets of homes get moved to the South side of the street you can actually move the street to line up with the other side. This will lessen the impact on the adjacent current owners.

Mr. Al Vagnozzi of 128 Patriot Drive

Questioned the property maintenance and upkeep. Do they plan to have a Home

Owners Association?

Mr. Canavan explained that they will have private roads and a Home Owners Association that will take care of all of the snow plowing, sidewalks, and grass cutting, etc.

Mr. Evans made a suggestion to the homeowners that were here tonight to get a central individual to be the contact for communications.

Mr. Milligan, at this point, stood and thanked the Planning Commission for their gift and for all they do for this Township. It has been a pleasure working with all of you and to serve the Planning Commission. Their concern for the community is reflected in the quality of life that we've enjoyed here for many years.

He then asked Mr. Bryan Bortnichak to stand and introduced him to the Planning Commission Members, Consultants and the audience. Mr. Milligan said he has a strong background in Land Development and Sub-Division and came from East Norriton Township. He will be taking over for him at the end of February when he retires. Mr. Bortnichak thanked Mr. Milligan and addressed the crowd saying they could meet with him when/if they had questions.

Mr. Grace explained that there was no timeline on a Zoning Text Amendment. They would like to sit down with them and hash out more details and then bring it back in front of the Planning Commission.

Mr. Evans explained the process to the homeowners and that they were here at the best point possible, the starting point.

Mr. Dooley explained at this point that some of the homeowners have hired an attorney and he was present tonight. Mr. Baldassari of Furey & Baldassari, P.C. Mr. Baldassari said he was there only to observe.

Mr. Caggiano made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Stoll at 8:10p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Caggiano