

PLANNING COMMISSION 2019

MEETING DATE APRIL 17, 2019 7:30 PM

Jim Reading called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. Members of the Planning Commission in attendance were Barbara Cohen, Michael Pellegrino, Eric Rahe, Morris Quigg, Jim Reading, Curt English, and Michael Bauer. Township Engineer John Sartor and Township Solicitor William Brennan were also present. Current elected Board of Supervisors in attendance in the audience were Mark Donovan and Jim Morrisson. Township Manager E.J. Mentry was also in attendance.

The minutes from the March 20, 2019, meeting were approved.

Todd Pohlig presented a Tentative Plan titled Eagles Pointe at Sedgley Farm, which is a second plan submitted under the existing Planned Residential Development Ordinance for the Reeves Property located at 943 Valley Forge Road. The first plan (Sedgley Farm) was denied by the Township Board of Supervisors and is currently in the appeal process. Mr. Pohlig explained that during the Sedgley Plan review, one of the main concerns was the number of homes on the southern lower portion of the property. The Supervisors felt it was a safety issue to have the high density housing on the southern side. The Eagles Pointe plan calls for the high density housing (60 units) to be on the northern portion of the property and 30 units on the southern portion, which will be all single family homes. This does not need a second access. The 30 homes on the southern side will not be equipped with sprinkler systems. The Sedgley Plan was going to equip the 60 homes on the southern side with sprinklers. Eagles Pointe will still be marketed as age targeted housing. The Eagles Pointe plan has approximately 50% open space with more open space being on the southern portion of the property. The PRD ordinance requires a minimum of 35% open space. The northern part of the property contains a trail head and public access to the trails. A trail does run along the property bordering the existing properties on Dorchester Way. If that trail was eliminated, the plan still meets the amount of trails that the ordinance requires. The maintenance of the open space will be handled by a HOA. Mr. Pohlig has been working with AQUA Pennsylvania about stormwater quality and vegetative filters. The three existing historic residences will be preserved and unchanged.

Eric Rahe asked if this Eagles Pointe plan was developed in response to the Boards denial of the Sedgley Farm plan. Mr. Pohlig answered yes, that it was. Barbara Cohen asked John Sartor about the changes, if there was any major impact on engineering, etc. John Sartor stated that the plans are very much the same engineering wise. Barbara Cohen asked about PennDOT approval timeline and road improvements. Mr. Pohlig stated that there is a right turn de-acceleration lane and a left turn lane on Route 23/Valley Forge Road. Penndot determined that no signal is required. Eric Rahe asked if the roads were private or public. Mr. Pohlig stated there will be a gated access at East Philip Drive to eliminate cut through traffic and it is a recorded covenant. That access is a private street. All other roads within the community will be public. The gated access was also on the Sedgley Farm plan. Mike Bauer questioned the Townships EAC review letter regarding the wetlands area. Mr. Pohlig stated that the wetlands are not actually on their property, they are on the portion of the property owned by AQUA (the property bordering the reservoir). Mike Bauer asked about a stormwater plan. Mr. Pohlig said the By-Right stormwater management plan was approved under the Townships Stormwater Ordinance, Chapter 310, and that the PRD and By-Right plans are very similar in coverage and stormwater. He stated that soil

testing has been very good and feasibility has been good. John Snyder stated that AQUA has communicated with them that they do not want infiltration methods used, they want the water to get to the reservoir as quickly as possible via rain gardens, vegetative filtering. DEP & AQUA have authority over the Townships stormwater ordinance. John Snyder stated that the open space areas will be maintained by HOA and will be deed restricted as to the specifics of how it will be maintained. If the HOA wants to make any changes in the future they would need to get the Townships approval.

Eric Rahe questioned if this plan was developed as a negotiating tool. Mr. Pohlig said no, that he took the Board of Supervisors opinions into consideration and re-designed the plan.

Karen Hillard, resident at 920 Valley Forge Road, commented about the amount of children in the development and how the area schools are already overcrowded. She prefers the first plan (Sedgley Farm) because it is less density behind their houses. She also voiced concerns about the additional traffic impact on the overcrowded Route 23, the widening of the entrance to the development, water problems and the effect on the existing wildlife.

Suzanne Rockey, resident of East Philip Drive, stated that the Eagles Pointe plan showing the high density housing on the northern portion, behind the Dorchester Way homes, doesn't fit in with the existing area. It's too heavily populated and doesn't blend with the existing neighborhood.

Eric Rahe stated that the Planning Commission did approve the Sedgley Farm plan. He questioned Mr. Pohlig on which plan he would prefer to build if he would win the appeal on Sedgley Farm. Mr. Pohlig responded that either plan would be fine, and that the sellers of the property have been extremely patient over the years but would like to move the sale of the property forward.

Claudia Kiernan, resident of Wells Road, asked the Planning Commission if they are approving breaking through the cul de sac that's been there for 65 years. She stated that it's a huge concern for the residents of that road. Barbara Cohen stated that the developer has recognized that concern and out of respect for the existing residents, is putting a gated entrance at that entrance. Suzanne Rockey commented that the PRD plan said only one access was accessible. She stated that the 21 year easement on the East Philip cul de sac plan has expired and it can not be broken through. John Snyder explained that the Sedgley Farm plan was a driveway to East Philip Road. The Eagles Pointe plan is a right of way and private road and that case law is clear on the use of an easement.

Barbara Cohen made a motion to conditionally approve the Eagles Pointe plan based on the conditions that it meets all Township approvals, including open space management plan restrictions. Michael Bauer seconded the motion. Motion approved by majority. Curt English and Mike Pellegrino voted no.

PRD Ordinance repeal discussion. The Planning Commission questioned why the Supervisors wanted to repeal the ordinance. Bill Brennan advised that they can not discuss it, as it is in litigation, however they did not want that type of home planning within the Township. Natural Lands Trust is reviewing the Townships zoning and current types of housing within the township to make sure we are compliant in offering multiple housing types. Bill Brennan confirmed to the Planning Commission that the Reeves property and the pending plans (Sedgley and Eagles Pointe) will not be affected if the PRD Ordinance is repealed by the Township. Mike Bauer stated when the PRD Ordinance was adopted it was voted in at 5-0. The Board of Supervisors now have a 4-1 vote to repeal the ordinance.

Morris Quigg made a motion not to vote or make any recommendation on the PRD repeal. Eric Rahe and Jim Reading agreed. All approved to not have an opinion on the PRD repeal.

Curt English provided a brief update of the Regional Comprehensive Plan and clarification of land uses. The major change to our township on the plan was reducing the urban area to keep it more within the Borough of Phoenixville. Barbara Cohen stated that it's very important to participate in a Regional Plan for funding opportunities. It also saves the Township money in developing a regional plan as the cost is divided among five municipalities.

Township Manager E.J. Mentry asked the Planning Commission about having a special meeting with Ann Hutchinson from Natural Lands Trust presenting the Growing Greener ordinance changes and SALDO developments. Mike Bauer asked if this was an immediate issue. It was explained that it will be a process, that it may take more than one meeting to review all the information. Morris Quigg made a motion to hold a special meeting date on April 29, 2019 at 7:30pm. Jim Reading seconded the motion and all was approved.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kimberly J. Yocom

Zoning Officer

Next meeting date: April 29, 2019 7:30pm

Next regular meeting date: May 15, 2019