

PLANNING COMMISSION 2019

MEETING DATE: JULY 17, 2019

Eric Rahe called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. Members of the Planning Commission in attendance were: Morris Quigg, Barbara Cohen, Curtis English, Michael Bauer, and Michael Pellegrino. Jim Reading was absent. Current elected Board of Supervisors in attendance in the audience were, M. Donovan, M. Majewski, F. Parry, and S. Guerette. Township Manager E.J. Mentry was in attendance as well.

The minutes from the June 19, 2019, meeting were approved with two minor grammatical edits. Changes were made and the minutes were revised.

New Business - Proposed Tree Protection Ordinance. M. Quigg and B. Cohen asked the Supervisors why they feel the township needs a tree ordinance now, is it for new development or existing residences? Manager E.J. Mentry explained that our current Subdivision and Land Development ordinance addresses tree protection for new land developments, this ordinance is intended for existing individual homeowners so they can't "clear cut" their properties. S. Guerette stated that the township is behind the times in this and that the Environmental Advisory Council recommended it. B. Cohen felt this could be an invasion of privacy on the residents and E. Rahe stated that this seems to put a burden on residents, making the township more like "big brother". M. Majewski commented that stormwater is a big issue, that trees help with controlling runoff and if they're removed it worsens the existing stormwater management problems. M. Quigg stated that the township tried passing a tree ordinance approximately 8 or 9 years ago and that the Planning Commission had recommended against it. S. Guerette said that is correct, and that it's a problem that it wasn't passed. M. Bauer asked who determines whether or not a tree can be cut down once a permit is submitted. E.J. Mentry said the township would need to appoint a landscape architect to make that decision. A property owner would not need a permit to remove three or less trees per year. E. Rahe felt that was a problem, that a large wooded lot was allowed the same as a small lot, that there was no scale to the ordinance. It needs to apply to a variety of properties. Trees that are removed would be required to be replanted on the same lot or donated to the township to plant on another property. S. Guerette wants the township to be proactive and not intrusive. E.J. Mentry said that Natural Lands Trust is looking into other municipalities ordinances and will help advise the township on what would work best. He did state that tree ordinances are hard to enforce, but many townships do have them. If a homeowner cuts down a tree without a permit they would get a zoning violation notice and be required to replace it. M. Bauer stated that if one tree is removed and three are required to be planted, then in ten years from now the homeowner is in the same situation. M. Pellegrino is in favor of having a tree ordinance but the way it is now, it needs work on requirements and specifics. M. Bauer said they need a reason to create an ordinance. S. Guerette said that all the trees in Maisfield were cut by Pulte. M. Donovan asked the Planning Commission to consider the ordinance will be passed, even if it isn't, but to give feedback. Discussion ensued about tree diameters, percentages of canopy coverage, exemptions etc. M. Donovan said that the intent of a tree ordinance was to maintain what is existing, not necessarily increase. B. Cohen made a motion to revise the current ordinance under review and present again to the Planning Commission. There was no second. Motion denied. E.J. Mentry asked the Planning Commission to please email any comments or recommendations to the township for review.

PRPC Comprehensive Plan – E. Rahe stated that the Planning Commission already took action on this and recommended approval of the PRPC. E.J. Mentry stated that this is the final draft and wanted the Commission to have final review and last chance for any comments. It will be on the September 2019 Board of Supervisors agenda to vote on. M. Bauer had some concerns with the future land use map. C. English advised that the map is only a suggestion from the PRPC and that the townships zoning map will remain the same. E. Rahe stated that the Commission will let the previous motion to recommend approval of the PRPC stand. C. Cohen agreed.

Wawa, 120 Schuylkill Road – Discussion ensued regarding Wawa adding underground diesel fuel storage tanks. E.J. Mentry stated that Wawa was advised previously by a former building code consultant that they would need a waiver of land development for the improvement to the lot. The planning commission discussed the definition of land development and agreed that this did not meet the definition. No waiver of land development is required, as it will be a building/zoning permit only.

With no further business to discuss, B. Cohen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:37pm. M. Bauer seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,



Kimberly J. Yocom

Zoning Officer

The next scheduled Planning Commission meeting is September 18, 2019, at 7:30 pm.