

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES – APRIL 8, 2024

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the Township of Lower Makefield was held in the Municipal Building on April 8, 2024. Mr. Bush called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Those present:

Planning Commission: Tony Bush Chair,
Tejinder Gill, Vice Chair
John DeLorenzo, Member

Others: Dan McLoone, Planner
John B. Lewis, Supervisor Liaison

Absent: Colin Coyle, Planning Commission Secretary
Adrian Costello, Planning Commission Member

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Gill moved, Mr. DeLorenzo seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of March 11, 2024 as written.

NEWTOWN AREA JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DISCUSSION AND
RECOMMENDATION

Mr. McLoone stated the Township was provided the Comprehensive Plan for the Newtown Joint Area which consists of Wrightstown, Newtown Township, and Upper Makefield. He stated Section 302 of the PA Municipalities Planning Code requires that the proposed Comprehensive Plan be sent to contiguous Municipalities and School Districts for review. Mr. McLoone stated comments can be provided by the Planning Commission tonight, and he will forward them to the Township solicitor.

Mr. McLoone reviewed how the Plan is broken down. He stated they list some guiding principles including smart growth, preservation of open space, parks and rec, and preserving their Villages. He stated with regard to Lower Makefield, it speaks specifically to the parts of the areas that border Lower Makefield. He stated it indicates that the Zoning and Land Uses are generally compatible

along both sides of the boundary. He stated it also talks about the land in the vicinity of Dolington in Upper Makefield to insure that development is appropriate to the Village with appropriate buffering and other treatments occurring on both sides of the Municipal boundary. He stated that is relevant with Subdivisions going along Newtown-Yardley Road and development in general. He stated there is discussion about regulations for buffering, and they also discuss future Zoning and Planning for this area which is generally compatible. He stated they also discuss how the Bucks 2040 Plan (which the Lower Makefield Planning Commission had looked at) has been considered and incorporated into the Plan. He stated it also discusses how Newtown Township borders the same two DEP watersheds that we do – the Neshaminy and the Delaware River South. He stated they also talked about how they are having some wireless issues in Upper Makefield.

Mr. DeLorenzo asked if Lower Makefield is part of this and participating in this kind of Plan or do we have any thoughts of doing it, and Mr. McLoone stated we are not that he is aware of. Mr. McLoone stated when Lower Makefield does its Comprehensive Plan, it is just for our Municipality. He stated he feels that they reason they do it is because they have a lot of different intensive types of land uses as some parts are very agricultural, some are very industrial, and some parts are more dense in terms of housing. Mr. McLoone stated the last Lower Makefield Comprehensive Plan was done in 2019 so we will be start working on that soon as the guideline for that by the MPC is every ten years.

Mr. Bush stated there is a fair amount of development that has recently happened or will be happening near where Lower Makefield and Newtown border each other. He stated he feels it is important for Supervisor Lewis as well as Newtown to work together and make sure that traffic flows as well as possible and that things are not over-developed to the point where it becomes a problem to fix traffic. He stated he would encourage the body that oversees the Jointure and Lower Makefield to continue to communicate with each other. Mr. McLoone stated we can convey that.

Mr. McLoone noted on Page 7 about the Newtown-Yardley Road area with the Subdivisions going in there. He also noted Dolington, and if there is any planning for Dolington Village. He noted Page 34 with regard to traffic calming, and he felt possibly the Jointure could call out specific locations for traffic calming in their area to further guide them in their Plan. Mr. Bush asked if there was anything specific about traffic calming that bordered Lower Makefield or was it just a more-generalized comment, and Mr. McLoone stated it was just a more-generalized comment that was something that they wanted to do more of in the future.

Mr. Lewis stated the Jointure is a unique Municipal body in that it helps all of the Municipalities that are part of it focus on specific land uses so that they do not have to have within their jurisdiction all of the possible land uses, and that is a benefit for them. Mr. Lewis stated he was very happy to see some discussion about stormwater management and an increased focus on that. He noted that Upper Makefield dealt with the same issues that we dealt with on July 15.

Mr. Lewis stated one area in terms of cooperation and coordination which he feels is vital are properties that are owned by one owner that exist in multiple Municipalities. He stated it would be a good idea for the representatives from the Township and the Jointure to talk about those specific properties and strategies around those in the long term so that we do not get caught in a situation where a property owner looks to leverage one Municipality over another and allows us to affirmatively plan out a future for those parcels. He stated there are not many of them, but there are some and they are significant. He stated he also agrees with Mr. Bush's comments about traffic calming specifically as it relates to the border of Newtown, Upper, and Lower Makefield recent development as well as the areas in Dolington where there is increased traffic. He stated a number of these are State roads which is helpful in getting investment for traffic calming or reduction efforts.

Mr. Gill moved, Mr. DeLorenzo seconded and it was unanimously carried to recommend to the Board of Supervisors to stress that the Jointure cooperate with Lower Makefield and communicate about the shared border whether it is traffic calming or development.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Alex Davidoff, Bridle Estates Drive, stated he has a number of questions about the Wright Subdivision. He stated he understands that the Plans were just submitted to the Planning Commission, and he asked if any of the members have reviewed them. Mr. Bush stated they have not yet reviewed them, but the Plans will go through the normal process; and they will be reviewed at public meetings, although nothing has been scheduled at this time.

Mr. Davidoff asked if it is known when public meetings will be scheduled. Mr. McLoone stated the Township received a full submittal on April 1 and the time expires on July 7, 2024. He stated he assumes it will be at either the May or the June Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Davidoff asked if the residents of the Bridle Estates community will be notified of the meeting. Mr. McLoone

stated it will be on an Agenda, and we will do our due diligence in terms of advertising. He added it is the responsibility of the developer to make notification.

Mr. Davidoff asked if the Township is aware of which members of Bridle Estates Drive, Colts Lane, and Jockey's Way have been provided the Notice of Land Development Application. Mr. Davidoff stated several of the residents received it from the Township a couple of days ago, but not everybody in the community received it. Mr. McLoone stated the Township received an e-mail about everyone who was notified, and it is the responsibility of the developer to do so. He stated Mr. McLoone could come into the Township office to discuss everyone who was notified about the Subdivision.

Mr. Davidoff stated he assumes they have not yet looked at the traffic studies or the "water studies" related to the submission; and Mr. Bush stated the Planning Commission itself has not yet had an opportunity to review the Township's consultants' reports, and the Planning Commission has not yet reviewed this as a body. Mr. Bush stated that the Township has just now begun the process of reviewing what has been submitted, so we are not really in a position to substantively respond to Mr. Davidoff's questions. He stated the Planning Commission will be in that position by the time it is scheduled to be before the Planning Commission.

Mr. Lewis stated all of the documents that were provided by the developer have been loaded onto the Township Website, and Mr. Davidoff could review those. He stated if Mr. Davidoff finds issues or concerns or items that do not meet the MPC and State Law, he should bring those to the Township's attention. Mr. Davidoff stated he has already downloaded all of those documents; and while he understands that the Planning Commission has just received the submission, he was trying to understand what the Planning Commission knows and what they are able to share. Mr. Bush stated they are not able to share much at this point beyond what is publicly available on-line, but we will be prepared when it is scheduled to be before the Planning Commission. He stated if Mr. Davidoff has any concerns or comments about the proposal, the Planning Commission will address them at that time.

Mr. Davidoff asked if the Planning Commission is able to provide an update on the status of the Torbert Farm Subdivision. Mr. Bush stated when that was last before the Planning Commission in July/August, the decision on Preliminary

or Final Plan Approval by the Planning Commission was postponed pending further discussion between the Township and the developer. Mr. Lewis stated he understands that we do not have a Preliminary Plan that is ready for review by the Board of Supervisors or the Planning Commission. He stated he understands that it is likely that we will not be getting it before May 1, and there will probably be a request to extend the deadline again. He stated he does not know how long the developer or the developer's counsel will ask to extend. He stated there are some traffic issues that are still being reviewed with the developer as well as the structure of their Plan, which he believes is part of the reason why we have not received final plans from the developer.

Mr. Bush stated when this was last before the Planning Commission some of the issues that were discussed with the developer were potentially changing where Mirror Lake Road is, and there was also discussion about preserving some portion of the site; but this was all subject to further discussion between the developer and the Township. He asked Mr. Lewis if is able to share anything about that at this time, and Mr. Lewis stated the developer was going with a Plan by-right which would not require any Zoning Variances.

Mr. Davidoff asked if the "Traffic Ordinances around the Torbert Farm" permit direct access from Yardley-Newtown Road or the Newtown By-Pass. Mr. Lewis stated possibly from Yardley-Newtown Road, but that would depend on whether they extend Mirror Lake Road. He stated prior versions had discussions about extending Mirror Lake Road as the entry point into the parcel, and there are some discussions as to whether that will be required or not. He stated there are also some other traffic-related issues that are being discussed with PennDOT although he does not have the latest status on that.

Mr. Davidoff stated he has the same concerns about the Wright Subdivision that he is raising about the Torbert Subdivision which was why he was trying to understand the status of them. He stated it seems that it is neither approved nor denied and that the traffic concerns have not been finalized, and Mr. Lewis agreed.

Mr. Davidoff stated one of the concerns that he has is that the "appropriate members" of Bridle Estates Drive, Colt's Lane, and Jockey's Way have not been informed; and he wants to make sure that everyone has received the same letter and the same information about this proposed development. Mr. McLoone stated they can look into that.

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There being no further business, Mr. DeLorenzo moved, Mr. Gill seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tony Bush, Chair