

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES – JUNE 23, 2008

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the Township of Lower Makefield was held in the Municipal Building on June 23, 2008. Chairman Bush called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Those present:

Planning Commission:        Tony Bush, Chairman  
   Karen Friedman, Vice Chair  
   Dean Dickson, Secretary  
   John Pazdera, Member

Others:                            Nancy Frick, Director Zoning, Inspection, and Planning  
   Maureen Burke, Township Solicitor  
   James Majewski, Township Engineer  
   Steve Santarsiero, Supervisor Liaison (joined meeting in Progress)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of February 25, 2008 were approved as written.

#582 – SANDRA MIDDLEMISS – PRELIMINARY PLAN DISCUSSION

Mr. Bob Pelke, engineer, was present to discuss his letter dated 6/16/08. There was discussion about the size of the houses, and Mr. Pelke stated the houses will probably be smaller than the existing house. He stated they have not gotten to the point of selecting a style of the house as they are in the preliminary stages. There was also a discussion about the adjoining historical cemetery and the possibility that the cemetery had at one time included part of the parcel.

Mr. David Brown, 2221 Stackhouse Drive, stated he has lived there since 1972 and is very happy with the configuration of the neighborhood as it stands and is not interested in seeing large houses built on the footprints they show on the Plan. He stated they also show a setback of 30' from the road. He stated the original setback on Stackhouse Drive is 50', and he questioned why they are setting it back only 30'. He stated he cannot picture an 1890' footprint with a 4,000 square foot home set 30' from the road; and he feels this will change the character of the neighborhood and objects to it. Mr. Pelke stated it is 30' from the right-of-way and there will be at least another 10' feet to the house.

Ms. Bunce, 2307 Yardley-Morrisville Road, stated she lives across the street in a home that is the same vintage as the original home. She stated her home is 1800 square feet and the surrounding houses are the same size, and she does not feel a 4,000 square foot home is representative of the houses in the area. She stated her home is one of the larger homes in the area and is 1800 square feet. She stated there are also a lot of one-story homes in the area and these are older homes which are not built near the road but are set back from the road on a footprint that is commensurate with the size of the house. She objects to the change that the proposal would cause aesthetically to the neighborhood. She also feels there will be a wildlife problem with the area as it is a big lot. She feels it is important in this part of the Township to consider the history of the house and the lot itself.

Ms. Judy Wells, Yardley Commons, stated she would like to comment on the stormwater management. She stated she is very aware of the problems they have had at Yardley Commons. She asked where the water will go. Mr. Pelke stated the present design they are proposing is for three infiltration beds along with some low impact rain gardens in the area. He stated one of the problems they have at Yardley Commons is that they do not really have any stormwater management facilities other than storm drains that convey the stormwater and do not really control it. Ms. Wells stated she is concerned with where the water will go from the property under discussion. Mr. Pelke stated they plan on infiltrating most of it into the ground. Ms. Wells stated there is an aerial photo of Yardley Commons taken when the original property was developed, and there is definitely some kind of pond on the property which has probably been filled in but should be investigated.

Ms. Wells stated Yardley Commons was only notified about tonight's meeting last evening so she has not had time to investigate, but she is concerned about the cemetery and how this impacts the property. Ms. Friedman stated they have entered into a dialogue with the Historic Commission who have more information on that aspect of the property, and they will make a recommendation.

Mr. Lee Winston, Yardley Commons, asked if the Subdivision of the property has already taken place. Mr. Majewski stated they have submitted Plans to the Township to subdivide the property. Ms. Burke stated the Application is for a Major Subdivision.

Mr. Winston asked if the existing house will remain, and Mr. Dickson stated it will. He stated the existing garage will also remain and will be on Lot #2. There will be another garage built on Lot #3. Mr. Bush stated the Applicants will have to come back before the Planning Commission for approval of the actual Subdivision.

Ms. Wells stated currently on the back of the lots there is open space and a small fence. She recommended that a fence be required to separate this property from Yardley

Commons. Ms. Friedman stated they will consider this when they come in for Preliminary Plan review. Ms. Laura Filipo stated this fence would keep the privacy between the two properties and stop people from walking through. Mr. Dickson stated the residents will be able to dialogue with their neighbors and when the Applicant comes before the Planning Commission for Preliminary Plan review, the residents can bring up these issues again.

Ms. Jane Brown, Stackhouse Drive, asked if they will be notified of the next meeting, and Ms. Frick stated they will receive notification. Ms. Brown requested that notification be given more in advance of the meeting. Ms. Frick stated the earliest notification could be sent out would be the Tuesday prior to the meeting. Ms. Brown asked if there are any Zoning regulations restricting the size of the house. Ms. Frick stated there is a 35' height restriction. Ms. Brown asked if someone could build a house that would take up most of the lot, and Ms. Friedman stated they would have to situate the house in such a way that it would not expand past the building envelope. She stated this is determined by wetlands and woodlands on the property and different levels of slope. Mr. Majewski stated there are also impervious surface and setback requirements that dictate the size of the house.

Mrs. Peters, 2305 Stackhouse Drive, stated the idea of two 4,000 square foot homes on the lot is “mind-boggling.” She feels that 2,000 square feet would be the average for the existing homes on the street. She feels the charm of the neighborhood will be impacted. Ms. Friedman stated with regard to the size of the houses, when they construct a large house with a large front façade close to the road, it becomes a very imposing building. She stated at some point they will have to address how close the houses are to the edge of the road. She stated she understands that they pushed it forward ten feet in order to save the trees, and they will discuss this with their engineer in more detail. She stated to have a very large home 30' to 40' feet from the edge of the street, may create a problem visually.

Ms. Wells stated a smaller home might fit on the lot better. She is also concerned that they may push the homes further back from the street to satisfy concerns already expressed, and then make the homes too close to the homes at Yardley Commons in the rear. Ms. Friedman stated she sees on the Plan an existing garage that is the closest structure to Yardley Commons. Ms. Wells stated they cannot see this from Yardley Commons because of the undergrowth. Ms. Friedman stated the proposed house would not be close to that garage.

Mrs. Peters asked to be shown the existing garage on the drawing, and this was shown on the Plan.

Mr. Bush stated the Planning Commission will be hearing back from the Historic Commission. One woman asked that there be a requirement that they notify the neighbors when the Applicants meet with the Historic Commission. Ms. Frick suggested

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she call the Office tomorrow and she will provide the phone number for the Historic Commission Chair Person to determine their summer schedule.

Ms. Wells asked if Yardley Commons will be notified since they are not in the Township, and Ms. Frick stated she did notify Yardley Commons about this evening's meeting. She stated she notified Yardley Borough and Yardley Commons, and the notices were mailed out on Tuesday. Ms. Wells stated they did not get a letter until Sunday in her door. Ms. Frick stated she sent notices beyond the area required for notification.

Ms. Friedman stated they are requesting feedback from the Historic Commission and something in writing from Yardley Borough about the finality of the boundary line.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dean Dickson, Secretary