

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES – DECEMBER 8, 2014

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the Township of Lower Makefield was held in the Municipal Building on December 8, 2014. Ms. Friedman called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Those present:

Planning Commission: Karen Friedman, Chair
John Pazdera, Vice Chair
Dean Dickson, Secretary (joined meeting in progress)
John Tracey, Member
William Clark, Member

Others: Nancy Frick, Director Zoning, Inspection & Planning
Nathan Fox, Township Solicitor (left meeting in progress)
Maryellen Saylor, Township Engineer (left meeting in progress)
Kristin Tyler, Supervisor (joined meeting in progress)

Absent: Dan McLaughlin, Supervisor Liaison

DISCUSSION OF INFORMAL SKETCH PLAN FOR THE DOBRY PROJECT (ALTERNATE SKETCHES)

Mr. Edward Murphy, attorney, was present with Mr. Mark Havers, engineer. Mr. Murphy stated this property is located to the rear of Dobry Road against the Railroad tracks. He stated they were present previously in November with a Sketch Plan showing quad units. Mr. Murphy stated the Planning Commission was provided information previously with the locations of a number of quad unit developments in the area including the Shady Brook development and a project in Newtown on Upper Silver Lake Road both of which were done by McGrath. Photographs of those projects were provided to the Planning Commission this evening. Mr. Murphy stated the pictures are representative of the same style and type of construction that would occur at this proposed development.

Mr. Dickson and Ms. Tyler joined the meeting at this time.

Mr. Murphy stated the question they had for the Planning Commission was whether or not they felt the development of a single unit type would be permissible at this location as opposed to what the Ordinance requires which is two separate and distinct housing types. Mr. Murphy stated the Planning Commission had been reluctant to provide an opinion until the developer came back and showed an alternate plan of what it would look like if they did provide two types, and they have tonight a number of other sketches.

Mr. Havers showed a Plan with a mix of quads and townhouses showing twelve quads for forty-eight units and eight groups of four townhouses for thirty-two units with a total of eighty units. The townhouses would be two-story units. Mr. Havers showed another option with twelve quad buildings and two sixteen-unit each condos for a total of eighty units. He stated the condos they have seen were two-story units. Mr. Murphy stated they would achieve the same unit count as they are proposing with the all-quad development.

Mr. Tracey asked if the quads would be slab-on-grade construction, and Mr. Murphy agreed. Mr. Tracey asked if the townhouses would be of similar construction of slab-on-grade, and Mr. Murphy agreed.

Ms. Friedman stated she prefers the plan that has more open space. She stated her original concern was that every house would be exactly the same, and she asked if there was a way to make the facades slightly different within the quads to make them different. Mr. Murphy stated he feels they could modify facades. He stated there are pencil line drawings as well which they could show the Planning Commission.

Mr. Havers noted the location of the Railroad tracks in relation to this site.

Mr. Tracey stated he would prefer to have a plan which has more open space.

Mr. Murphy stated this development is back against the Railroad tracks and would not be visible from the road. He stated more open space might be more appealing if it was visible from Big Oak or Oxford Valley Roads. Ms. Friedman asked how far the townhouses shown on the one Sketch were from the Railroad tracks, and Mr. Havers stated it would be approximately 100'.

Mr. Dickson stated he would like to see variety in the houses, and Ms. Friedman stated she would also like to see façade and style variety which would add a layer of interest.

Ms. Tyler asked what the Applicant would prefer, and Mr. Murphy stated their preference would be to have the quads since from a community standpoint people prefer to live in a community that is somewhat similar although they would have different elevations/facades. He stated the Ordinance requires two different housing types.

Ms. Friedman noted one of the designs shown which she feels helps to pull some of the units slightly away from the Railroad tracks.

Mr. Pazdera stated because of the location of the site, he does not have a problem with all quads, although he noted an alternate Sketch which does provide some additional open space and is a little further from the tracks; however, at this location it does not seem that an additional 50' from the tracks makes that much difference. Ms. Friedman stated she does feel they should try to make it as nice as possible for the residents.

Mr. Murphy stated they will discuss this further with the Board of Supervisors.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Friedman stated Mr. Benedetto was at a prior Planning Commission meeting when the Community Center was discussed; and he was very adamant that the Planning Commission should be careful approving the Preliminary Plan because when it goes to the Board of Supervisors, the Supervisors could consider it as a Final. Ms. Friedman stated if the Planning Commission sends a recommendation on a Preliminary Plan to the Board of Supervisors, everything they list to be addressed would therefore be very important. Ms. Friedman stated she did not know that the Board of Supervisors could consider it a Final Plan if the Planning Commission made a recommendation just on the Preliminary Plan. She added she felt the Plan had to be brought back to the Planning Commission for a final review. Mr. Fox stated he understands that the Board of Supervisors always has the option to treat a Preliminary as a Final. Ms. Friedman stated she was not aware of this, and she would like the Planning Commission to recognize that whatever they send as a Preliminary is very important just in case the Board of Supervisors decides to act on it as a Final Plan. Mr. Fox stated the Applicant would have to ask for a Waiver request that the Preliminary be treated as a Final. Mr. Fox stated the Planning Commission is an advisory body, but the practice has typically been that the Supervisors honor a substantial number if not all of the recommendations made by the Planning Commission although this could change. He stated these are SALDO requirements; and if there is Zoning relief required, that would be an entirely different issue.

Mr. Fox stated he does feel that it would be wise for the Planning Commission to treat a Preliminary as if it were a Final Plan, and as if this was their last opportunity to make recommendations and comments since it is an option of the Applicant to make a request in writing to the Supervisors that the Preliminary be treated as a Final. Mr. Fox stated he feels the Planning Commission does a good job making recommendations with comments to the Board of Supervisors.

Ms. Friedman stated there was previous discussion about all the signs in Edgewood Village, and they have been removed. She thanked Ms. Frick for following through on this.

Mr. Fox and Ms. Saylor left the meeting at this time.

COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN UPDATE – SECOND DRAFT

Page 74 was noted, and Ms. Friedman stated she does not feel the need for the third paragraph except for the last sentence which could be attached to the second paragraph. Mr. Tracey stated he feels the last sentence could be misleading since it could be the house, the property, etc.; and he feels it is difficult to believe that almost six percent of the population in the Township are in the 100 year floodplain. It was suggested that the entire third paragraph be deleted.

Ms. Tyler stated she feels they should discuss the whole Section with the Bucks County representatives – pages 73 to 78 since this was before they did the new Ordinance. She also noted that the new FEMA flood maps will not be approved until March, 2015. Ms. Tyler stated they should also consider what was done with regard to the Community Rating, and they should look at this as well.

Page 79 was noted under Park and Recreation Planning. Ms. Friedman suggested eliminating the first two sentences of the second paragraph and re-writing the third sentence as follows: "Park and recreation planning to meet the needs of residents continues to be an important role for the township." She also suggested eliminating the sentence beginning "The activities..." This was acceptable to the Planning Commission.

Ms. Friedman suggested changing the first sentence of the third paragraph as follow: "Since completion ... Garden of Reflection memorial and various playgrounds, athletic and recreational facilities."

Ms. Tyler stated it has been some time since the Park & Recreation Board reviewed the draft of the Master Plan.

Under Background, Ms. Friedman suggested changing the second sentence and eliminating the words “estimated the amount of land needed to meet future active reaction needs” and changing “focusing” to “focused.”

Ms. Friedman noted page 81 Table 26 does not list the Five Mile Woods or the Golf Course, and the Bucks County Representatives had indicated that they did not have it in the Chart because it was discussed before and after the Chart; however, she feels the Chart should stand on its own so they have the whole complete list.

Mr. Dickson stated under the Samost Tract it states, “Currently under development” but the ball fields have been built. Mr. Pazdera agreed that this needs to be updated. Ms. Friedman stated she feels it should state, “Currently includes baseball fields, related structures, batting facility, and a future Community Center.” It was also noted that the sentence under the Table should be changed to: “The Snipes tract is a currently undeveloped...”

Ms. Tyler stated she feels that again this section is out of date and it is not reflecting where they are now. She stated she feels this whole Park & Recreation Section should go back to the Park & Recreation Board for their review. Ms. Tyler stated the Planning Commission should send it back to them with their recommendations and should also indicate to them that they feel the Five Mile Woods and the Golf Course should be included in the Table.

Future Needs and Recommendations for Action was noted on Page 85, and Ms. Friedman suggested changing the first sentence under 1. to read as follows: “1. Locations for future recreation lands – As the township approaches full development it is even more essential that ...” Under a. Ms. Friedman suggested changing it as follows: “Available land – Although the pace of residential development has slowed as the community approaches build-out, there are developable parcels...”

There was discussion about eliminating or changing the next two paragraphs. Ms. Tyler stated Appendix C does explain the methodology used for the calculation which is based on the Zoning Ordinance. Ms. Friedman stated she feels this section is very confusing and is getting specific when it does not have to.

After consideration Mr. Dickson stated he feels the two paragraphs should be left in the document; and Mr. Pazdera agreed adding if the twenty-nine acres is not enough to meet the long-term needs, they will have to consider other ways of supplementing it.

Ms. Friedman stated she felt they were on target for satisfying the recreational needs not including the Five Mile Woods and the Golf Course.

It was agreed to leave the paragraphs as shown.

Page 86 was noted, and Ms. Friedman suggested eliminating the last sentence in the second paragraph under 2. Bicycle/walking path.

Page 87 was noted, and Mr. Dickson stated under Community Center it should read as follows: "The township is building a community center on a portion of the Samost Tract fronting along Oxford Valley Road. The center is designed to provide meeting space..."

Mr. Dickson noted 5.a and suggested that the second sentence read as follows: "Land development plans were prepared and two baseball fields and related facilities have been completed." The next sentence should read, "The site will also house the township's community center."

Under 4.b. Ms. Tyler stated she feels the last sentence should read, "The township's recreation program should continue to support arts and culture as part of a well-rounded community program such as the Artists of Yardley currently located on a portion of the Patterson Farm."

Ms. Tyler noted b. Snipes Tract and stated this is now where Mr. Kall has Public Works set up. She questioned whether they should mention this. She also asked if the Plan for the Snipes Tract is still on the books. Ms. Tyler stated she feels this is the opportunity to discuss whether the Snipes Tract's future still includes the planned Park & Recreation improvements. Ms. Tyler suggested that when the Park & Recreation Section is sent back to Park & Rec they be asked to evaluate the plan for the Snipes Tract.

Page 88 was noted, and Mr. Pazdera noted the second paragraph, and stated the all-inclusive playground has been built already so this must be updated.

It was suggested that this also go back to the Park & Rec Board for review.

Ms. Tyler stated they should make comment on the potential for school field trips and family outings because the all-inclusive playground has changed the dynamic of Memorial Park. She stated they want to put a pavilion there so that people can come their with their families, and Park & Rec should make comment on this as well.

Page 89 on Open Space and Conservation Planning was noted, and Mr. Dickson suggested changing the first sentence to read, "Open space resources will continue to be..."

Ms. Friedman questioned whether the 1,200 acres of open space includes the Five Mile Woods and the Golf Course. Ms. Tyler stated she understood that number did include those, and Mr. Pazdera agreed.

Ms. Friedman asked what happened with the funds from the sale of Elm Lowne since it was purchased with Open Space money. She stated she feels it should be back in the Township funds tagged for open space preservation. She stated this does not relate to the Master Plan, but she would like to know where the funds ended up.

With regard to Page 94, Ms. Friedman stated she feels the Golf Course should be listed as #9 since it is visual open space. Mr. Dickson stated the question is whether it is active recreation or open space. Ms. Friedman stated she feels it is both. She noted that the Five Mile Woods is listed and that is both open space and active recreation. Ms. Friedman stated the Park & Recreation Board could do a write-up on the Golf Course regarding the acreage, use, location, etc. and include it in this section.

With regard to Page 97 Ms. Friedman stated under Landscaping/Water Conservation, the last sentence should read: "Planting trees and maintaining the canopy in the proper locations..."

Ms. Tyler stated with regard to Energy Conservation, she is not sure whether this is the place where they should discuss the problems when the trees come down and impact the power lines. She stated the Electric Reliability Committee is going to be partnering with the EAC to consider a balance between removing trees in the danger zones and having trees. Ms. Friedman stated it does state trees should be in "proper locations" which she feels alludes to that point; and you would not want to put them where there are utility lines, but you do want to maintain the overall canopy acreage of the Township.

Ms. Tyler stated she is not sure whether it should be in here, but they need to consider vegetation management and taking trees down that are near power lines; and they are discussing potential Ordinance changes to require homeowners to take trees down which have been flagged as a danger. Ms. Friedman asked if they would have to take the whole tree down, and could they not take down just a limb; and Ms. Tyler stated this would depend. Ms. Tyler stated they also need to determine if the Township has the will to do this or not. Ms. Friedman stated she feels this is

bigger than Energy Conservation, and Ms. Tyler stated she agrees that it would not fit in there. Ms. Tyler stated she is going to consider where this might be appropriate to put in the Plan.

Page 98 was noted under Transportation, and Mr. Tracy questioned the use of Segway Personal Transportation by the police which he does not feel the Police would be in favor of although they may be in favor of electric motorcycles. Ms. Friedman asked if this Section was discussed with the Police Department.

Ms. Tyler noted on Page 98 under Township Accomplishments for 2006 it indicated that there was a commitment to use 20 percent alternative energy by the year 2010, and she asked if this was accomplished since it is now 2014. She stated she feels the EAC should comment on this. Ms. Tyler stated also on the next page, they should add a final bullet point for 2014 that they amended and enhanced the Tree Replacement Ordinance. After further consideration, Ms. Tyler stated if they are not going back to the EAC for anything else, she does not feel it is necessary to review the comment on Page 98 about the use of alternative energy.

Mr. Bob Dwyer stated he represents BPC which owns a majority of the Lower Makefield Corporate Center and Floral Vale where they are going through some problems with vacancy rates, and they are trying to encourage a connection with Edgewood Village. He stated he feels that the Township was looking forward to Edgewood Village being something more than it is today with a connection to Office/Research and the neighborhoods. He stated ten years from now they may find that there are Police on Segways through Edgewood Village and into the Office Parks.

Ms. Friedman noted Page 100, comment 2 does not seem to have been finished, and she suggested that the sentence continue with "private business to install such stations."

Page 103 was noted, and Ms. Friedman suggested that the last sentence in the first paragraph be re-written as follows: "... between historicity and sustainability for the benefit of better energy efficiency and durability, as well as cost savings." The rest of the second paragraph would then be deleted.

With regard to the fifth paragraph, it was suggested that the second sentence read as follows: "Several small businesses have ..." since the uses being listed may change going forward.

There was discussion about the Section dealing with Planning and Zoning in Surrounding Municipalities beginning on Page 117, and Ms. Tyler stated that Lockheed is empty and Aria is considering development at Shady Brook; and she feels what happens with these sites will have a lot to do with 332 and traffic passing through the Township. She stated it is currently uncertain what is going to happen at these sites so she is not sure what they could comment on other than the fact that there is potential for significant change on 332. Ms. Friedman stated she feels this is addressed in the Ten Year Plan in that it states they need to keep addressing re-using space that is available and how it effects the Township. She stated it indicates the Township needs to constantly be aware of this.

Ms. Friedman stated with regard to the Implementation Section beginning on Page 123, she did not have any problems although they need to make sure when they review the final Plan that all the page numbers correlate perfectly. She did ask that the Planning Commission members review this Section when they have time to make sure that it says everything they need it to since the entire Plan comes down to these pages in bullet points.

Ms. Friedman stated the next step is to consider how to put the maps in and the different appendices. She stated possibly they could put the appendices in the back. She stated she wants to make sure it makes the most sense for the reader.

Ms. Frick asked if they want the Bucks County representatives present at the next meeting, and Ms. Friedman agreed. Ms. Friedman asked that the marked-up copy with the requested changes be sent to them prior to that meeting. Ms. Friedman stated she also has the list of questions the Planning Commission needs to discuss with them.

Ms. Tyler asked about Park & Rec feedback, and Ms. Friedman stated she feels Park & Rec should tighten up their piece. Ms. Tyler stated she is particularly concerned about the Snipes piece. Ms. Frick agreed to notify Ms. Liney about this. Ms. Friedman stated she also feels the Five Mile Woods and the Golf Course should be in the chart they discussed this evening, and she asked that Park & Rec consider this as well.

OTHER BUSINESS

It was agreed to cancel the December 22, 2014 meeting due to the Chanukah celebration.

It was agreed that they will ask the Bucks County representatives to come to the January 12, 2015 meeting to discuss the Comprehensive Master Plan.

December 8, 2014

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There being no further business, Mr. Dickson moved, Mr. Clark seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dean Dickson, Secretary