

Milford Township Planning Commission
MINUTES
May 26, 2020, 7:00 p.m.

A meeting of Milford Township Planning Board was called to order at 7 P.M. by Chairman Robert DiLorenzo through a teleconference, the call-in number for which had been advertised in advance in the Pocono Record. Also present in this teleconference meeting were Kevin Stroyan (Vice-Chairman), Patrick McCarthy (Member), Peggy Emanuel (Member), Ray Willis (Member), Solicitor Thomas Farley, Zoning Officer Shawn Bolles, and Secretary Shahana Shamim.

Mr. Stroyan and Mr. Farley suggested some corrections to the previous Meeting (Planning Board) minutes, which the Secretary had suggested. Mr. Stroyan made a motion to accept these minutes with their suggested corrections, Mr. DiLorenzo seconded, and it was passed unanimously.

1. DEPG – Santos’ Property Informal Presentation

Mr. Jim Depetris, the Developer, said that Doug Olmstead (Project Development Manager), Nate Oiler (site Engineer), and Charlies Schmehl (planning consultant) were present for the presentation. He continued that they had brought the number of residential units down to lower than 50 units, which was a part of this mixed-use. These units would be for-sale condominiums instead of apartments. There would be a high-volume driveway, as a couple of restaurants, a coffee shop, and a convenience store would also be included in this mixed-use development. Mr. Farley inquired if it was a formal or an informal presentation. Mr. DePetris replied that it was their informal presentation, and hence the clock won’t run from that point.

Mr. Oiler gave an overview of the site plan. He said that the sketch plan consisted of ten acres, and it was situated on the south side of Route 6 & 209. He continued that the driveway was towards the south side, and a meeting would be coordinated with the PennDOT to discuss a permit for this driveway. There would be a traffic light, which would provide an exit for the Municipal building. A drip irrigation system would be used in the gray area of the plan, and the soil testing for that had already started. The shade area showed the flood plain, which was quite steep and won’t be developed, from the Delaware river. The pub would occupy about 6,000 square feet, the fast food restaurant 4,300 square feet, and the convenience store would be accompanied by a gas station. There would be a retail area and a drive through coffee shop on the other side of the driveway. There would be two condominium buildings, each of which would have 24 condominiums, and an On-lot sewage system, and a central water system would be there. The stormwater management area would be between the residential and commercial uses.

Mr. DiLorenzo said that he was still waiting for the results of the soil test. Mr. Olmstead explained that the results were being put together, and the drip irrigation system would be used. He continued that they had already contacted some manufacturers, who would be able to design this system. They had informally talked to Mr. Osterberg about the access to the County property, and an alternate access to the County Property might be possible. Mr. DiLorenzo inquired what the shaded area at the bottom of the property was. Mr. Olmstead replied that it was the flood plain area, and the darker dotted line under that was the boundary of the County property.

Mr. Schmehl explained that they were adding condominiums as the allowed use. Ten more condominiums per acre would be added if central water and central sewage are available. There would be a 50' set back within a development between new residences and commercial buildings. Currently the average lot coverage in a development is 65%, whereas for this proposed Amendment this coverage could be 50%, 60%, or 70% for each lot, while maintaining a total of 65% for the whole development. The shade tree requirement would be increased to make the development attractive, and this increment would be a shade tree every after ten parking spaces. According to the existing Ordinance, a developer has to use national data sources for designing the parking, whereas the proposed Amendment would advise developers to use the Institute of Transportation Engineering Parking Generation Manual for this design. The sign regulation is also proposed to be updated for this commercial multiuse project.

Mr. Farley inquired why the proposed Amendment included plans for a Central Sewage, as the proposed plan was already set for the On-lot sewage. One of the representatives of DEPG replied that the Drip Irrigation System would be considered as the Central Sewage System as per the existing Ordinance. Mr. Farley suggested changing the term "Central Sewage" to something like "community sewage system", which would be serving multiple units in a property, as the term "Central Sewage" was being used for the public Central Sewage, which was being proposed to be extended along the three-lane. Mr. Olmstead replied that they were trying to use the existing nomenclature from the existing Ordinance. Mr. Farley suggested making drive-through facilities as a conditional use, which could be time consuming and challenging, for safety purposes, as the Township might presume it to be necessary. Mr. Olmstead said that DEPG would be happy to provide appropriate language for making the drive-through facility a conditional use. Mr. Farley further commented that there were some parking spaces right beside gas pumps, and he inquired if those would be considered as satisfying the parking requirement. Mr. Olmstead replied that customers often leave their cars in gas pump spaces, they go inside the convenience store to get a coffee or a hotdog, and hence these spaces could be considered as actual parking spaces.

Mr. Farley inquired if using the Institute of Transportation and Engineering (ITE) would reduce the parking requirement from the requirement of the current Ordinance of Milford Township. Mr. Schmehl replied that according to ITE, 44 parking spaces are required for convenience stores. He added that they had followed the fast food restaurant in the Westfall Township - this restaurant did not incur any parking shortages, and a similar parking ratio was being used for this gas station. Mr. Farley commented that Section 431, which was being proposed to be added to the Ordinance, implied that the drip irrigation system would become the Central Sewage System for this development, and Mr. Schmehl said 'yes'. Mr. Olmstead commented that this development under discussion would be serviced by the on-lot sewage system, and it would not be tied to any public Central Sewage System, which might run down the three-lane in the future. He added that they would not mind correcting phrases for the sewage system.

Shawn Bolles, the Zoning Officer, suggested taking a look at the Zoning Ordinance #417.4, which suggested placing parking spaces behind residential buildings. Kevin Stroyan commented that proposed changes to the Ordinance needed to be clearer (by italicizing, for example) so that average people could understand the changes. He added that the brew pub, limited distillery, and convenience store also needed to be defined, and the Central Sewage needed to be made clear. Fred Weber inquired if residential buildings would still be

apartments, which would be called condominiums. Jim DePetris replied that these residential buildings would have high quality condominiums, and they would be working with an architect to design these condominiums. Fred Weber further inquired what led them to think that this area needed another gas station. Mr. DePetris replied that nearby gas stations were not facing any competitions, and this new gas station would provide extra convenience. Shawn Bolles commented that convenience stores in nearby gas stations, such as Gulf and Turkey Hill did not have sandwiches.

Erika Burnett commented that although she was happy about the fact that the DEPG changed the residential construction plan from apartments to condominiums, she did not think the forum was appropriate for this presentation. Mr. Olmstead replied that the COVID-19 situation was not DEPG's fault, and this development would take a long time to come to fruition. Mr. DePetris added that they were trying to end up in a win-win situation by moving to condominiums, as there were some strong messages against rental apartments. Patricia Lutfy inquired what the by-laws were for condominiums. Mr. DePetris replied that condominiums are for-sale products, but those can be rented. He added that he would come up with an answer for her question. Ms. Burnett commented that the gas station/convenience store was not suitable for such a beautiful piece of land. Members asked presenters to send a revised suggestion to the Amendment and to cc presentation contents to all Members so that they would have more time to review before the next meeting.

Emergency Management:

Mr. DiLorenzo said that he had been doing some research on this topic, and he added that he had been posting current situation updates. He and Mr. Stroyan said that in person meetings would start in this Township in the near future, and maintaining social distancing in these meetings needed to be discussed. Mr. DiLorenzo said that acquiring a larger venue, which could allow social distancing even with a large number of meeting participants, was discussed in Supervisors' meetings, but more discussions about this matter were needed. Mr. Stroyan suggested using the Township garage for meetings. Mr. DiLorenzo replied that there were instruments and equipment all over inside this garage, and people might get hurt, and he suggested using the high school auditorium for meetings. Mr. Patrick McCarthy suggested using outdoor movie theatres, where there could be an outdoor screen and participants could tune to a certain channel to listen to the presentation. Mr. Farley commented that this system would not allow participants to comment. He added that the school auditorium would be better, as a large crowd could be accommodated with social distancing.

Sewage Project:

Mr. DiLorenzo commented that there were no sewage failures in Milford Township, and if any new businesses hire 200-300 people, then the Township won't have the capacity to handle it. Mr. Stroyan commented that while the HRG was working on the Extension of the Central Sewage, it was not communicating with Delaware River Basin Commission, and HRG did not have its TAR approved as of then. Mr. DiLorenzo added that the Township hadn't heard anything from the Milford Municipal Authority either. Mr. Stroyan added that the Milford Municipal Authority had never signed the Intermunicipal Agreement. Mr. DiLorenzo made a motion that if anybody wants to hook up with this Central Sewage, they would have to hook up with their own money.

Mr. Stroyan said that the Township would have to review the Act 537 Plan draft, which the Township hadn't received as of then, and Mr. Shepstone would help with this review. Mr. Farley said that this item would have to be tabled in subsequent meetings until this revision is done. Mr. Shepstone added that he had reviewed the proposed survey, which needed to be tweaked only a little bit, and adding a couple more questions would make this survey more useful for figuring out issues and any necessary changes. Mr. DiLorenzo added that these tweaks would be very helpful, as the Planning Board was looking at proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance.

Water Shed Protection Plan:

Members informed that they had received Water Shed Management Ordinance samples, which Mr. Farley had sent to the office. Mr. Stroyan commented that these Ordinances were overbearing, and he inquired if Members felt that this Protection Plan for the Authority was important. Mr. Shepstone said that he would take a look at it.

Comprehensive Plan, Act 537 Plan, and survey questions:

Mr. Stroyan informed that Mr. Tom Shepstone would be available to work for the Comprehensive Plan, Act 537 Plan, and survey questions, but he would not be available to work on Mr. DePetris' plan. Mr. DiLorenzo inquired if Mr. Shepstone would be able to work on Mr. DePetris' proposed Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Shepstone replied that he would be able to answer to questions regarding this proposed Amendment.

Public Participation:

Shahana inquired if the DEPG proposal needed to be sent to the Township Engineer and to the County for a review. Mr. Stroyan told her not to send this proposal to the Engineer or the County, as it was just an informal presentation, and hence it was still premature to be reviewed by the Engineer or the County.

There was no other business to discuss, so a motion was made by Peggy Emanuel to adjourn. Mr. DiLorenzo seconded to it, and it was passed unanimously. Adjournment was at 8:17 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Shahana Shamim

Secretary