

Middle Smithfield Township Planning Commission Minutes

The regular meeting of the Middle Smithfield Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, August 21, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. at the Schoonover Municipal Building with Mark Oney presiding.

Members present: Mark Oney, Bob Early, Carrie Wetherbee, Wayne Bolt, Patricia J. Griffin, and Dr. William Suriano. Planning Commission solicitor Todd Weitzman, Esq. and township Secretary Michele L. Clewell were also in attendance. (Parin Shah and Fred Courtright, P.E. were absent)

Supervisors Mike Dwyer and Annette Atkinson were in attendance to present the Coolbaugh Road Community Gardens Park plan.

Approval of Minutes

Carrie Wetherbee made a motion to approve the July 17, 2014 minutes. Bill Suriano seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

Plan Submittal

MST Community Gardens Park Site Alteration Plan – Mike Dwyer and Annette Atkinson presented the plan on behalf of the Township. Mr. Dwyer stated that the dedicated site location is 47.67 acres off of Coolbaugh Road; land that was acquired through the Cradle of Liberty acquisition.

The land had been previously timbered in the late 1980's prior to the Townships ownership.

The plan calls for the disturbance of (1) acres, whereby 4'x8" individual planters will be built, surrounded by a circular area with approximately (22) parking spots plus (2) handicapped accessible parking spots. The planters will be raised off the ground by approximately 2'. A fence will be installed around the garden area.

Annette Atkinson stated that future phasing would include a walking area, benches for interaction, children's playground, pavilion and grills. As an underserved area with no amenities on Coolbaugh Road, the Board of Supervisors wants to do something for the area.

The Boy Scouts have already expressed interest in building the planter boxes for their Eagle Scout project.

Ms. Atkinson stated that the rules committee stated that the gardens will be organic and the Monroe County Bee Keepers Association will also be contributing with classes and bee hives.

Business sponsors for (1) year intervals will help off-set the costs to the taxpayers.

Wayne Bolt stated that traffic on Coolbaugh is extreme and asked what would be done about that? Mike Dwyer stated that the traffic to and from the gardens will only be the residents, unlike other township parks that attract visitors from all over the area.

Bob Early asked if there would be a water source for the gardens. Annette Atkinson stated that the Public Works Department will fill the water buffalos on site, and hoses will also be used.

Four planters will be raised higher in order for the handicapped to access.

Donation to have a 4'x8' planter box is anticipated to be \$50.00 each, this would be a donation.

No lighting is proposed, as with any township park the hours are dusk to dawn.

Mark Oney asked if the township will be holding any classes. Annette Atkinson stated that the Monroe County master Gardeners Club will be organizing classes.

Carrie Wetherbee asked if this would be creating another parking spot for illegal activities. Mike Dwyer stated that this will be like any other challenge with a park.

Bob Early made a motion to accept the MST Community Gardens Park Site Alteration Plan. Wayne Bolt seconded the motion. Bill Suriano abstained from voting as he may have some issues as a resident and is reserving that right to make a public comment at a public meeting. Motion passed 5 in favor and 1 abstention.

Carrie Wetherbee stated that she wished that the area could be gated at night to help with security issues. Mike Dwyer stated that could be done and added to the plan.

Attorney Weitzman stated that if the Planning Commission wants to make a recommendation with the changes they can do that tonight.

Plan Reviews and Unfinished Business

Carrie Wetherbee made a motion to recommend approval of the MST Community Gardens Park Site Alteration Plan subject to installing a gate at the entrance of the park and erecting a kiosk with the park hours. Wayne Bolt seconded the motion. Bill Suriano asked if this is a garden or a park. Mike Dwyer stated that it's a park. Annette Atkinson stated that it will start out as gardens but over time the other things mentioned will be phased in. Bill Suriano stated that he supports a park. Motion passed 6-0.

Reviews and/or Recommendations

None

New Business

None

Continuing Education

The agenda lists the dates and times of the upcoming Penn State Extension Land Use Decision Making Summer/Fall 2014 webinar series as well as the Easements Made Easy webinar.

Carrie Wetherbee asked about the sketch plan regarding the Holly Ground. Annette Atkinson stated that they were told they needed a land development plan and as that is cost prohibitive, they have not been back in.

Adjournment

Bob Early made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 p.m. Carrie Wetherbee seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele L. Clewell
Recording Secretary
August 21, 2014