

The regular meeting of the Middle Smithfield Township Planning Commission was called to order on Thursday, September 17, 2015 at 7pm at the Schoonover Municipal Building with Mark Oney presiding.

Members present: Mark Oney, Bob Early, Parin Shah, Carrie Wetherbee, and Dr. William Suriano. Township Engineer Fred Courtright, P.E. and Township Secretary Michele L. Clewell were also present. Wayne Bolt and Planning Commission Solicitor Todd Weitzmann, Esq., were absent.

Patrick McLaine, P.E. of Reuther Bowen Engineering & Mary Ann Freeby and Jim Harlukowicz of Reserve at Pond Creek were also in attendance as well as Supervisor Annette Atkinson.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes

Carrie Wetherbee made a motion to approve the August 20, 2015 minutes. Bill Suriano seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0

Plan Submittals

None

Plan Reviews and Unfinished Business

The Reserve at Pond Creek Mail Box Pad Sketch Plan – Patrick McLaine, P.E. of Reuther Bowen Engineering stated that they are proposing to build a 6'x12' concrete pad for the purpose of installing mail boxes with a canopy for the Reserve at Pond Creek residents. No utilities are required with only minor grading around the proposed concrete pad. Currently there is an existing turnoff area that would appear to be adequate.

Mr. McLaine stated that the applicants hope is to not be required to complete a full land development plan.

Ms. Freeby stated that the reasoning behind moving the mail box location is so that the Pond Creek Association has control of the maintenance and to make it safer for their residents as it currently is muddy and slippery during the winter months with no cover from the inclement weather.

Fred Courtright provided written comments regarding the sketch plan.

Carrie Wetherbee questioned if there would be lights for the mailbox area. Ms. Freeby, Property Manager for the Reserve at Pond Creek stated that street lights provide adequate lightening.

Jim Harlukowicz, Vice President of the homeowners association showed the location of the street lights that will provide lights.

Carrie Wetherbee stated that she will recuse herself from the vote as she is a member of the Country Club of the Poconos South Board and feels there is a conflict.

Mr. Harlukowicz stated there are (48) homes within the pond creek area.

Bill Suriano asked if the (4) RGB lots would be included in mail box area and Mr. Harlukowicz said yes they would be.

Parin Shah asked for the number of mail boxes that would be required. Ms. Freeby stated the mail boxes come 16 in a cluster and they will need 4 clusters.

Mr. Courtright's comments were discussed and questioned the canopy as that would constitute a structure which would be a requirement to produce a land development plan.

Parin Shah asked if they considered ADA requirements. Mr. McLaine stated that only the curbing would need to be changed near the road way in order to accommodate ADA requirements.

Mr. McLaine stated that he does not understand the purpose of going through the land development process and feels that a sketch plan would suffice as a canopy roof is a minimums impact. Bob Early stated that although it is minor, the canopy is still a structure under the SALDO.

Parin Shah stated that they have to follow the ordinances and are bound to them with the exception of allowable modification requests. Due to what has been presented, a land development is required. Mr. Freeby asked if they were only going to build the concrete pad and not put up a canopy would that be considered a land development. Mr. Courtright said no, but they should check with the zoning officer with regards to permitting.

Mr. McLaine questioned the fees associated with a land development application and stated that the small homeowners associations within The Reserve at Pond Creek cannot afford the costs. Parin Shah stated the waiver of fees must come from the board of supervisors, not the planning commission, but once it's done it will set a president.

Ms. Freeby stated that she will contact the township in order to schedule a meeting with the supervisors to discuss the possibility of waiving the land development fees.

Mark Oney asked if vehicle headlights would be shown through anyone's living room if the new mail box area is built and Ms. Freeby said no. Mr. Courtright stated there will be no more headlights with the mailboxes than without.

Mr. Courtright and Mr. McLaine stated that they will be in contact prior to the supervisors work session.

No action taken.

Proposed Ordinance Amending Article IX "Signs" of the Township Zoning Ordinance – The proposed ordinance was reviewed by each member. Following lengthy discussion Carrie Wetherbee made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed sign ordinance to the supervisors subject to the following: the supervisors consider the verbiage with regard to prohibiting vehicles from parking on the shoulder of a road way and or parked on a commercial property with writing on the vehicle advertising a business for more than (24) hours. Bob Early seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Old Business

Bob Early stated that following further discussion with regard to lot frontage requirements when dealing with irregularly shaped lots; Polk Township's verbiage meets what we are looking for. Although Polk Township does not have central sewer and they do have high density in their language, MR. Early does not believe it would be an issue (as Middle Smithfield Township does provide central sewer in certain areas of the township) with high density lots although he is not encouraging higher density.

Continuing Education

Carrie Wetherbee stated that she will attend the fall webinars beginning October 21, 2015.

Mrs. Wetherbee stated that she and Mark Oney attended a round table discussion with the National Park Service and they are asking for the public's input as to what to do with the over 700 building on park service land. There were discussions on charging for vehicles entering the park, allowing modern planes to be in the airspace of the parks and skydiving. Additional information is available on their website.

Public Comment

Annette Atkinson invited the planning commission members to the supervisor's public hearing to consider the sign ordinance on Thursday, September 24, 2015 at 7pm.

Ms. Atkinson also stated that the ESASD has identified (45) properties within the surrounding township's including MST and the list has been sent to the Monroe County Assessment Office. The school district is saying that these businesses are not paying enough in taxes. The supervisors have already begun alerting the property owners of the October 5, 2105 school board meeting.

Adjournment

Parin Shah made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 pm. Bob Early seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Michele L. Clewell
Recording Secretary to the MSTPC