



MIDDLE SMITHFIELD TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
September 24, 2020

The regular meeting of the Middle Smithfield Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, September 24, 2020 at 5:30 pm at the Schoonover Municipal Building with Bob Early presiding.

Planning Commission members present: Bob Early, Parin Shah, Mark Oney, Nick Theofilos and Alternate Member Carrie Wetherbee. Also, in attendance, Township Engineer Chris McDermott, P.E., Planning Commission Solicitor Deborah Huffman, Esq. and Township Secretary Michele Clewell.

Plan Presenters in Attendance: Jeff Worthington, Ben Hoffer, Tom Diehl and Chuck Niclaus for the Timber Rise LLC and on behalf of Lake of The Pines HOA, Stacy Goetz, John Clarke and Kenneth Wiggins.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes

Parin Shah made a motion to approve the August 27, 2020 minutes. Nick Theofilos seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Following approval of the minutes, Chairman Bob Early asked that Carrie Wetherbee be seated as a voting member.

Announcements

None

Plan Submittals

None

Plan Reviews and Unfinished Business

Highland Oaks Preliminary Major Subdivision: Township Engineer Chris McDermott stated that comments are still being addressed based on his review letter and recommends the plan be tabled until the next regular meeting. Parin Shah made a motion to table action on the Highland Oaks Preliminary Major Subdivision plan. Nick Theofilos seconded the motion. Motion passed 5 0.

Mr. McDermott also stated that a letter was received from the applicants engineer, Deanna Schmoyer, P.E. granting an extension of time to render a decision on the plan to December 24, 2020. Nick Theofilos seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Other Reviews and/or Recommendations

Timber Rise Development Sketch Plan: Jeff Worthington, Ben Hoffer, Tom Diehl and Chuck Nicklaus (Barry Isett & Assoc.) presented a sketch plan for discussion purposes only. The (377) acre parcel is off of Resica Falls Road, 6 miles from Marshalls Creek. The property is accessible through the Timber Mtn Development and is in a R-1 zoning district.

Mr. Hoffer stated that they are visioning a 500-unit, age restrictive senior active adult community. The units would be 2-bedroom units for rent, not for sale or lease, but will keep their options open. Rental agreements are normally one year but can do a two-year agreement as turnover is low.

There was discussion regarding sewerage for the 500-units and where would it be located. Ben Hoffer stated that they have a plan for a drip irrigation system with a lagoon. Mr. Nicholas stated they have met with PA DEP and the Monroe County Conservation District. Using 100 acres of the property for the drip irrigation and lagoon, site testing is required and additional meetings with PA DEP. There have been no perc or soil testing done for sewerage as of now because they are looking for feedback from the planning commission before committing to the expense of testing.

Chris McDermott asked about the water system. Mr. Nicklaus stated there is an existing private water system for the Timber Mtn. Development currently in place and they would seek to expand that. Water flow per unit would be 400 or less per unit.

Mark Oney asked if they are going to phase the project. Ben Hoffer stated that expect to do this in 2 phases. Mr. Oney asked about an emergency exit as the sketch plan only shows one way in and out. Jeff Worthington stated that Timber Mtn Drive ends with a stub. This is a Township road and is wide, it is labeled on that subdivision plan as a "collector street"; it is a boulevard road and will accommodate the traffic. If they have to build a secondary access to Route 402, it will not be practical due to the terrain of the land. Mr. McDermott stated that by using only one road, they will need to make sure emergency services can access the community in the event of a natural disaster.

Carrie Wetherbee stated that with COVID-19 she is concerned with the dense community, everyone being so close together, emergency services and the units being rented. Mr. McDermott stated that the applicant will have to identify the classification of the housing and Mr. Worthington replied, they are townhouses.

Bob Early stated that this is type of plan would be a conditional use hearing, in the R1 zoning district. Performance standards, max density is 5 unites per acres and asked how much property are they dedicating to the project. Mr. Worthington stated that the ball park of 500 units is based on using the density of 377 acres. The adjusted tract area is out of the 377 acres. If the 500-unit count has to drop that is okay he said.

Mr. Hoffer stated that there will be an amenity building for the residents of the community.

Carrie Wetherbee asked about children living there and Mr. Hoffer stated that by law they cannot say anything, however only one other time has this issue come up in their other communities. She suggested they consider the possibility of school busses.

Chris McDermott stated that the Ordinance is specific, one person must be 55 years old and no residents under 19 for a period of more than three months. He said this would need to be noted on the plan. Mr. Worthington stated that although the Township Ordinance states that, there is a Federal Law regarding age discrimination and housing and if they have to ask for a variance they will.

Resident parking was discussed. Mr. Hoffer stated that each unit have a one car garage with parking space in front of the garage for a second vehicle.

Mass transit was discussed and Mr. Hoffer stated they do have a community shuttle bus service for the community.

Carrie Wetherbee asked about clear cutting the land and what are their intentions. Mr. Hoffer stated they will preserve the beautiful trees, and to remember the plan they are looking at is only a sketch plan.

Mark stated that they need to dive into coming back with answers regarding the boulevard, septic/water, and emergency access/exit. Bob Early and Parin Shah both said this is a nice community with no load on the school district. Mr. Shah asked for a list of the other communities they have developed and asked that it be sent to Michele Clewell. Mr. Hoffer stated that he will also provide the townships where they have submitted plan to as well.

Mr. Oney stated that he is excited to see the possibility of growth there, with the C-2 commercial district on Route 402 and could spur some development in the future.

Mr. Niclaus stated that due to the length of time to get permitting from PennDOT, for road access onto State Road 402 and NPDES permitting from the Monroe County Conservation District, he is asking if construction can get started while waiting on these permits. If they can get the right of way and write off from property owners along Route 402 to be able to use Township Road Timber Mtn Road. Mark Oney stated that a road bond would be required. Mr. McDermott stated that this would trigger them needing a Traffic Impact Study. Mr. McDermott stated that he would recommend the process now by holding a scoping meeting with PennDOT.

Chris McDermott stated that all of this should be brought up during the final plan approval process and conditions regarding PennDOT HOP maybe addressed in the Developers Agreement.

It is understood that at the request of the applicant, during the sketch plan process, the plan will be placed back on the agenda for discussion purposes only.

Lake of the Pines Sketch Plan; Stacy Goetz, President of the Lake of the Pines HOA presented a sketch plan of a proposed school bus stop located within the private community. She stated the issue they have is one way in and out. Parents stop in the middle of the road and the mere volume of vehicles is a safety hazard. The HOA purchased a 50'x100' easement from a property owner and they would like to put modified stone down so that vehicles can pull over to let their children out. Currently, vehicles are blocking other vehicles that are trying to come off of Route 209.

Chris McDermott stated that if they are not putting up a building, it may not trigger a land development by may require site alteration plan and/or stormwater management plan approval. He stated that if they use pervious pavement, that can be used in the calculations for the stormwater management. You wouldn't be able to use cinders for snow removal but could use salt.

Mr. McDermott stated that they should hire an engineer to lay out the plan design, site alteration and stormwater management. He also stated that the Township zoning officer will ask if it's a permitted use, there could be zoning issues.

Attorney Huffman recommended they talk to the zoning officer and find out where this fits into the zoning code. Mr. Goetz stated that they did speak to Judy Acosta and she refereed them to the planning commission.

Mark Oney stated that based on the arrows of the sketch plan layout, they may be better off installing a curb.

John Clarke asked if it would be an issue with just using the 50'x100' area as it is with the grass now. Chris McDermott said the cars will sink into the soil.

Mr. McDermott recommended they speak to the zoning officer, again, do a site plan so the zoning officer can see if there are any triggers within zoning/SALDO. He does not believe it will have to be reviewed by the Monroe County Conservation District.

New Business

None

Discussion

None

Continuing Education

Penn State Extension Land Use Webinar Series- Carrie Wetherbee updated everyone on the last webinar on flea/farmers markets with regard to designing traffic patterns.

Public Comment

None

Next Meeting

October 22, 2020 at 5:30pm.

Adjournment

Parin Shah made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Nick Theofilos seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted

Michele Clewell
Township Secretary
September 24, 2020