



MIDDLE SMITHFIELD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MIDDLE SMITHFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION JUNE 24, 2021 SPECIAL JOINT MEETING MINUTES

A special joint meeting of the Middle Smithfield Township Board of Supervisors and Middle Smithfield Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, June 24 2021 at 6:00 pm at the Schoonover Municipal Building.

The meeting was held in-person, with the option for the public and other attendees to participate through video and audio advanced communication technology (“ACT”), using the ZOOM internet application, including telephone option.

Board of Supervisors present: Annette Atkinson, Mark Oney and Mike Dwyer. Planning Commission present: Bob Early, Wayne Bolt, Nick Theofilos and Carrie Wetherbee. Also present were Township Solicitor Michael Gaul, Esq., Planning Commission Solicitor Todd Weitzmann, Township Secretary Michele Clewell, Planning Commission Recording Secretary Patrice Dume, and Tom Comitta and Erin Gross of TCA, Inc.

Annette Atkinson called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm with the pledge of allegiance.

Follow Up from the June 3, 2021 Steering Committee Meeting

Tom Comitta went over the expected schedule for preparation, review and adoption of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan Update. The Board of Supervisors could consider the final Plan Update for adoption at the Board’s September 23, 2021 meeting, after a public hearing the same date. In order to meet that schedule, the Township would need to submit its draft Plan to the Monroe County Planning Commission, East Stroudsburg Area School District and adjoining municipalities for a final review at least forty-five (45) days prior to the scheduled public hearing and Board adoption date, i.e., no later than August 9, 2021.

The Middle Smithfield Township Planning Commission will review the final draft at their August 26, 2021 meeting and provide their recommendations/comments before the Board of Supervisors’ September 23, 2021 meeting.

Mr. Comitta asked that everyone, including those not present tonight, send TCA their comments on the current draft document by July 12, 2021, as the 3rd DRAFT of the “Plan” will be send out by July 19th, and then distributed to the outside agencies mentioned.

Discussion on Comprehensive Plan Update

Mr. Comitta explained initially the difference between the current draft Plan Update and the Township's 2008 Comprehensive Plan. He stated that the framework of the current draft Plan has been simplified and the zoning districts have been aggregated by way of grouping districts together.

Erin Gross reviewed the changes that have been completed by the Steering Committee for the 1st and 2nd draft(s).

Changes made;

1. One page 15, revised the total number of survey respondents. Wanted to include everyone.
2. Composting and recycling was added.
3. Adding higher education opportunities.
4. Low intensive industry opportunities.
5. Chapter 4, 4.1 master plan and street scape was added.
6. Priority of the overall recommendations.
7. Changed the "MSTMA (Middle Smithfield Township Municipal Authority) to the Middle Smithfield Township Sewer Department.
8. Added a long term -6 to 10 years in Chapter 4

Attorney Gaul stated that the structure of the Plan Update is different than the structure of other plans Comprehensive Plans he has reviewed. In particular the draft Plan Update does not contain many of the plans referenced in Article 3 of the MPC. He asked if this the way they are being done now? Tom Comitta said Article 3 of the Municipal Planning Code ("MPC"), contains two important and distinct terms, "shall" and "may". Municipalities shall review their comprehensive plan every 10 years. Municipalities may amend the existing plan in whole or in part. By being fiscally responsible, and speaking with the Board of Supervisors, we all said we would economize in part and focus on a policy plan.

Mark Oney said when we asked Monroe County Planning Commission ("MCPC") about our existing plan, they told us that the 2008 "Plan" its just as good as it was 10 years ago and didn't see a reason to make drastic changes and to just "tweak it". Attorney Gaul asked if the intention was to make the 2021 Plan Update a supplement to the 2008 Plan? Mr. Comitta responded "yes".

Mike Dwyer stated that he would expect this document to replace the other one, so as to eliminate confusion, and cumbersomeness of interested person having to reference two separate documents in order to find information and answers to questions.

Mr. Comitta stated that TCA would add to the current draft Plan Update an appendix containing all of the still valid parts of the 2008 Plan, so a single document could be referenced.

Attorney Gaul asked if the Township's existing Zoning Ordinance and SALDO have been reviewed prior to determining whether the proposed ordinance amendments contained the draft Plan Update are necessary? Erin Gross stated that she had reviewed the Township's current draft Zoning Ordinance Amendment and had found the Plan Update's proposed ordinance amendments were needed.

Erin Gross asked for feedback about the compost and recycling center. Mike Dwyer stated that he believes they are two separate things, and to make it one category is not going to be good. The impacts on adjoining property owners are different. Bob Early stated that the Steering Committee had discussed that topic at one of its meetings. Mike Dwyer stated that you have to define, either 2 or 3 overlaying descriptions, composting is totaling different than bottles and cardboard. The impacts are different. Erin Gross stated that based on the discussion at the June 3rd meeting, recycling should be in a different zone and the same with composting. Mike Dwyer said recycling should be in the Industrial zone. Mark Oney said the compost facility is off of Oak Grove Drive, within the 3B area of the draft "Plan". Mike Dwyer and Annette Atkinson both agree that recycling should go in the Industrial zone.

The recycling center and recycling collection definitions need to be defined within the draft plan. Mark Oney said a recycling center could be a pole barn that anyone could drive through. Erin Gross asked the what the overall thought might be; recycling center vs. drop off or both. Mike Dwyer said drop off doesn't need a definition. Mark Oney is thinking of more of a drop off location for the public. Erin Gross said that was their understanding based upon the June 3rd discussion, and asked if this should remain in the 3-B area, which is mainly R-2 and R-3. Mike Dwyer offered that it should be commercial district within the 2A area; Ms. Gross will make the changes to the draft "Plan".

There was discussion regarding combining the parties within Chapter 4 Implementation section. Mr. Comitta asked everyone to review and get those comments back to him or Ms. Gross.

Discussion regarding Chart #7; Master Plan for the Route 209 corridor. Mr. Comitta asked if everyone wants to keep it. Mark Oney said "yes". Attorney Gaul agreed, stating that the impact of the infrastructure and design, and build out with the Route 209 corridor, is the biggest planning issue in the township. Mike Dwyer said in 10 years we could potentially be fully built out on Route 209 and have to include the Route 402 corridor. Once Route 209 is built out, then we only have Route 402 for commercial district. Tom Comitta stated that there is no down side to have a master plan for the Route 209 corridor. It does make you more eligible for State grants.

Mike Dwyer stated that the Route 402 corridor should be considered. Erin said they will add a master plan reference for Route 402, along with the Route 209 corridor.

Mark Oney stated that the only issue he sees in the future is the implementation metric. In the 2008-09 plan there was a period of time where the Township went crazy on changing the zoning, and then activity just stopped. Mr. Oney asked how that could be avoided this time. We now have an amended zoning ordinance ready, which the Solicitor is reviewing now...how do we get all this done? Tom Comitta recommended that Middle Smithfield Township meet with all of their committees, boards, commissions quarterly and tell them what the Township is working on and what the goals are. Mr. Comitta indicated this process could start in early 2022 and have two meetings a year with the volunteers. You want their input.

Mark Oney stated that we did not involve the National Park Service. Erin Gross stated that on page 4.23, it talks about collaborating, but not how to. Mr. Comitta stated that they will get back to everyone with ideas on Tuesday on how to involve the National Park Service.

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

Wayne Bolt made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:58 p.m. Carrie Wetherbee seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Mchele L. Clewell
Township Secretary
June 24, 2021