



UPPER UWCHLAN TOWNSHIP

Planning Commission Meeting

December 9, 2021

7:00 p.m.

Minutes

Approved

LOCATION: The meeting was held in person at the Township Building
140 Pottstown Pike, Chester Springs PA 19425

In attendance:

Sally Winterton, Chair; Joe Stoyack, Vice-Chair, Stephen Fean (via phone), Ravi Mayreddy,
and Jeff Smith

Josh Hagadorn, P.E., Township Engineer
Tom Oeste, Esq., Township Solicitor
Tony Scheivert, Township Manager
Gwen Jonik, Planning Commission Secretary

Absent: Chad Adams, David Colajezzi, Jim Dewees, Jim Shrimp

Sally Winterton called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. as a quorum was present. There were 18 citizens in attendance.

Petition to Amend Zoning Ordinance and Map ~ 161 E. Township Line Road

Marc Kaplin, Esq. introduced a Petition to Amend the Zoning Ordinance and Map for a 33.2 acre parcel next to Eagle Industrial Park, a Senn property. Bel Canto Asset Fund LLC is asking for an amendment to allow for medium-high density overlay district to build a 210-unit apartment project. Not all acres are usable; they believe their proposed design will blend in with the community; introductions were made for several others involved in the project – Tom Leonard, Jen Nevitt, Bob Koch of Fugleberg Koch Architects, Langan Civil Engineering. They stated their dedication to open space, designing and developing communities from the ground up, they own the property and keep it pristine, market rate apartments for young families to seniors who want to stay in their community after downsizing.

This is a complicated site with steep slopes, sitting near the turnpike, next to the industrial park that they stated would get cleaned up if they received approval. Mature trees along the northern boundary with Rising Hill Lane; there's an unimproved access from Senn Drive; a creek runs east to west through the site. A taped presentation by the Architectural firm was played, showing a preliminary concept drawing, a roundabout entrance from Senn Drive at a clubhouse; amenities and the Management facility central to the development; 2-story buildings, walkout basements on the low side; protected stream/creek channel; 2 parking spaces per apartment; 6.3 apartments per gross acre.

Joe Stoyack appreciated the time and effort involved in the presentation but questioned why an amendment was requested as this parcel is already in the flexible development overlay district that allows apartments. Mr. Kaplin noted that today's apartment development is limited by the densities in Upper Uwchlan's regulations, which are more suited for townhouses. Mr. Kaplin asked for discussion about the benefit of amending the ordinance and allowing greater density as there's a demand for apartments which doesn't seem to be slowing down. Townhouses are 3-4 bedrooms, too big for today's rental consumer. Mr. Kaplin noted more folks are working from home, moving back to the suburbs from the city, mobile workers, single-again households, and denser development preserves the open space around it.

Planning Commission members' comments: most of their questions would be land development related and premature; there'd be an impact to traffic at East Township Line and Route 100 with 210 apartments; they're uncomfortable writing or amending an ordinance for a specific lot/parcel;

Mr. Leonard replied that they spent money on the concept and the design, to establish their credibility, to begin a dialogue with the Board of Supervisors. They could return to the Planning Commission for more input if the Board of Supervisors is interested. They'd like to address the lack of apartments in Upper Uwchlan.

Sally Winterton asked if any attendees had comments:

Alexandra Rose of Shea Lane commented that traffic is an issue along Route 100 and there are apartments in the near vicinity.

Steve Egnaczyk of Stonehedge Drive complimented the presentation but doesn't think this fits in with the rest of the township at that parcel, there's no connection to trails, no public transportation.

Justin Brewer of Rising Hill Lane commented that this density isn't expected. The presentation was nice but they can't expect a recommendation after only one meeting.

Sue Quake of Lauren Lane also commented on traffic issues and doesn't favor added density.

Sally Winterton appreciated the time and effort that was evident with the presentation. The Planning Commission needs to look at the ordinance aspect.

Mr. Kaplin noted they had met with staff, the concept was looked upon favorably and they crafted the presentation to keep talking about the project, to see if the township has any interest. They're in no rush and a Hearing has not been scheduled with the Board of Supervisors.

Tom Oeste, Township Solicitor, advised that property owners can petition the Board of Supervisors to amend zoning, and Township Code Section 200-135 states that if the Planning Commission finds the petition is consistent with and desirable in furtherance of the Comprehensive Plan, they provide the Board of Supervisors with that statement. Is the Planning Commission in support or not in support of this petition?

Joe Stoyack noted the parcel is already zoned multi-family so an amendment isn't needed, Bel Canto should work within existing regulations, and he is not in support of the petition.

Jeff Smith moved that the Planning Commission does not support the petition because the proposed amendment is for a property that is already zoned R-3 and within the Flexible Development Overlay which includes multi-family dwellings and the Commission doesn't recommend adopting. Joe Stoyack seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

A brief recess was taken at 8:25 p.m. for the Bel Canto attendees to exit.

Windsor Baptist Church ~ Gym Construction

Jim Sebra and Phil Marks, representing the Church, provided information regarding constructing a gymnasium in an earlier Phase, once the classroom building is done, as a charitable donor has offered to fund the project 100% and is seeking guidance for estimates. The classroom addition is currently under construction; they hope that will be completed summer 2022; modulars buildings would be removed Fall 2022; they have a volunteer athletic director; the gym wouldn't increase school attendance; they currently bus students to other facilities; the gym is another phase of their master plan. No locker rooms or showers, just restrooms. Other Phases include an addition to the sanctuary, to accommodate anticipated church membership growth, the gym had been included in their "Family Life Center" in Phase 3; there's also an administration/office expansion planned, too. The gym's primary use is by the school students; use will be daytime and then evenings would be for community activities.

It was suggested they bring back their initial phased plan, show all the phases at buildout so the Commission has a good visual of all that's going to be there. Add parking and traffic flow into the visual. Aligning their access on Park Road to with Ticonderoga Blvd should be included, as well as the trail along Park Road.

Tony Scheivert noted that no action is to be taken tonight. The Church will come back with greater details in the near future.

Approval of Minutes

Jeff Smith moved, seconded by Joe Stoyack, to approve as presented the minutes of the Planning Commission's November 11, 2021 Meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Open Session

Sue Quake, Lauren Lane, asked if there was a new plan submitted by Toll for the 100 Greenridge Road project. Mr. Scheivert replied it will be posted on the website as soon as possible after receipt.

Alexandra Rose, Shea Lane, commented that more and more people are walking on the roads in the evening without lighting. Perhaps a blurb about road safety could be included in the next newsletter.

Old business: Joe Stoyack noted he continues to edit and review ordinances for outdoor dining, and he's working on parking. He also noted Township Boards and Commissions will be asked in 2022 for input for the Comprehensive Plan update.

Sally Winterton thanked the Commission members for their efforts this year and wished everyone happy holidays.

Gerry Stein, Greenridge Road, asked who works on the Comprehensive Plan? He'd like a trail on Greenridge Road but it's probably not feasible. Joe Stoyack noted the Commission is responsible to oversee it, with input from the public and boards/commissions.

Adjournment

Joe Stoyack moved, seconded by Jeff Smith, to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 p.m. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen A. Jonik,
Planning Commission Secretary