

East Manchester Township
PLANNING COMMISSION
and ORDINANCE REVIEW
MINUTES
January 28, 2014

At a regular meeting held at the Township Building, the following members were present: Blaine Rentzel, Robert Nace, Edward Hewitt, Mike McCowan, and Mike Scarborough. Also present: Engineer Laymon Mortorff, Zoning Officer Jon Beck, Recording Secretary, and one citizen.

Acting Chairman Rentzel called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Reorganization

Motion by Nace, second by Scarborough, to nominate the following slate of officers for 2014: Blaine Rentzel as Chairman; Mike McCowan as Vice Chairman; and Ed Hewitt as Secretary. All members voted aye; motion carried.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of November 2013 were approved with no formal motion or second.

Plans

Rezoning request for 245 and 285 Steamboat Boulevard

Jim Barnes was present on behalf of Jim Craft on this application to change the two Residentially (R-1) zoned tax parcels to (I) industrial. Access is via Steamboat Boulevard. This property had previously been zoned Industrial and was changed to Residential at the last rezoning by the Township. The applicant would like to have it changed back to Industrial; the other parcel on the lot is now zoned Industrial. Total acreage is about 20 acres. Why was it changed to Residential? A history with the former owner, apparently. Enough said.

Mr. Beck reminded the Planning Commission that there is a plan "out there somewhere" for a residential development, from 2007.

Mr. Mortorff asked "what about more Industrial land?" Is there the possibility of increasing the zone? Might be something that the Township Supervisors could consider. The Planning Commission could recommend that this be accomplished.

Motion by Scarborough, second by McCowan, to recommend approval of the rezoning request for 245 and 285 Steamboat Boulevard AND to urge the Supervisors to look at extending the Industrial zone in this area. All members voted aye; motion carried.

The Planning Commission discussed the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and Zoning Ordinance Amendments. Mr. Beck presented the changes that the Planning Commission recommended at its November meeting. Of note, were the changes to the ordinance regarding non-domestic animals and beekeeping.

Discussion was held on the minimum lot size for a resident wanting to keep chickens. Is it a minimum of three acres? Seems a bit large. The three-acre minimum is fine for livestock. The minimum lot size for poultry keeping should be 1 (one) acre. On the chart, the maximum number of animals permitted would be 12. Mr. Beck will make the changes.

Discussion was held concerning Group Child Care Homes and Family Child Day Care homes. Mr. Beck presented a draft of an addition to the Zoning Ordinance, with group child day care and family child day care home categories to be added as permitted by Special Exception in the Residential Zones, Ag, and Village Zone. The main difference between the two types of facilities is the number of children permitted to be cared for. Question – how about the requirements for inspections and code requirements? The Department of Public Welfare should take care of all that.

Require that these operations be permitted only in a single-family detached house. Will that leave the Township open to a challenge of the Zoning Ordinance as discriminatory?

Another issue came up this week regarding the Subdivision Ordinance and the permitted number of driveways. A recent subdivision and land development plan shows seven (7) driveways. The SALDO provides for the Board of Supervisors to permit this. Mr. Beck feels that a waiver should be required, not merely a Board review. A waiver process is a bit more involved and requires a note on the plan. Mr. Beck will add language to the SALDO to this effect for next month. He's also requesting language/input from Attorney Miller regarding in-law quarters for next month.

Also on driveways and clear sight triangles for access drives. Don't refer to a chart that doesn't exist any longer. Should the developer be required to provide clear sight triangles on all access drives? The SALDO is a bit ambiguous and really must be cleared up. Mr. Beck will provide ordinance language for next month.

Any other issues to address, while we're rewriting things? Nothing at this time. Discussion was held on narrow streets, parking on one or both sides.

Mr. Nace noted that the Board of Supervisors tabled a plan at their meeting earlier this month; why can't the Planning Commission do so? Because of time limits placed on the plans and the fact that the Ordinance states that the Planning Commission can only recommend approval or recommend denial of any plan. Is the Planning Commission permitted to continue a plan, particularly a plan that has too many open items? If that's what the group wants, the ordinance will need to be changed. It was noted that the appropriate signatures should be on the original plan submission. How many open items should be presented to the Board of Supervisors? Wouldn't it be better to have the Planning Commission take care of reviewing nearly all the open items before the plan goes to the Board?

Mr. Beck presented, for the Planning Commission members' previewing pleasure, a sketch plan that was submitted earlier in the month. The applicant is presenting an application for a Variance for the side setback, in hopes of getting approval before submitting an official land development plan.

Additional New Business

Nothing at this time.

The next meeting will be held on February 25, 7 p.m., unless otherwise noted.

Motion by McCowan, second by Nace, to adjourn. All members voted aye; motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie B. Maher, Recording Secretary