

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
UPPER POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP**

November 9, 2009

The regular meeting of the Upper Pottsgrove Planning Commission was held on Monday, November 9, 2009, at the Upper Pottsgrove Administrative Office, 1409 Farmington Avenue, with Elwood Taylor, Herb Miller, John Bealer and Donald Nice present. Also present were County Planner Michael Narcowich, Township Manager Jack Layne and Recording Secretary Michelle Reddick. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Taylor at 6:00 p.m. There were 5 people in the audience.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – A motion by Nice, seconded by Bealer, to approve the minutes of September 14, 2009, as written. All aye votes.

ZHB #2-09 JAMES E. TURNER – The applicant has requested variances for the following: (1) to allow a shed to be placed in the front yard; (2) to reduce the set back from the rearmost portion of the principal building; and (3) to reduce the set back from the side and rear property line. Mr. Turner was present to discuss his application for zoning relief to allow him to place a shed on his property along Gilbertsville Road. He explained the shed would be located behind a row of evergreen trees, but that by definition in the ordinance, the location of the shed is considered to be in the front yard. Therefore, without the zoning relief, he cannot have the shed. A motion by Miller, seconded by Nice, to recommend to the Zoning Hearing Board approval of the application for zoning relief. All aye votes.

ZHB #3-09 HOPEWELL COMMUNITY CHURCH – The applicant has requested variances under §§ 350-139(A)1, §§ 350-139(A)2 and §§ 350-139(A)3 in order to allow the placement of three separate signs on the property. Deacon Donald Taylor and Al Dulis were present to discuss the application. Deacon Taylor explained they are proposing to replace the existing wooden sign with a new digital sign. He further explained the new digital sign is considered two signs and variances are needed to allow two signs and for the square footage of the sign. Deacon Taylor also noted they are proposing a parallel wall sign on the side of the building which will be accomplished by using an outdoor projector. In response to a question from Mr. Nice, Deacon Taylor explained the property is located along Route 100. Chairman Taylor advised that the problem with the proposal is that the Township does not have any ordinances for these types of signs. In response to a question from Mr. Miller, Deacon Taylor explained that the Gobo, or projector sign, would have five different slides. In response to a concern expressed by Mr. Miller, Chairman Taylor advised the Township Solicitor said that we cannot regulate what types of signs are permitted. Deacon Taylor noted there is an outstanding issue in Bedford County with a sign that says “Jesus is Our Savior”. Mr. Narcowich noted he dealt with a similar issue in Ambler with Ambler Savings Bank. He explained that you can regulate how often the message changes based on the change rate and location along the highway. Mr. Narcowich further explained that even though you cannot regulate the message, you can limit the amount of words and you can regulate change rates, animation and color of sign. He noted the suggestion would be that the color for the message would be lighter than the background color. In response to a question from Mr. Nice, Deacon Taylor advised the sign would be on a timer to go on at dusk and go off at dawn. The Planning Commission agreed to forward a letter to the Zoning Hearing Board advising that they do not have any objection to the size of the pedestal sign and they are not opposed to the concept of the LED sign, but would like them to consider the following: (1) change rate; (2) animation; and (3) color of lettering (should be light on dark).

Diana Updegrave, 1404 Farmington Avenue, noted the LED sign is an advertisement for the church and that people are now putting these types of signs on their houses. Therefore, the Township needs to carefully consider the decision made on this request since the Township does not currently have any regulations for these types of signs. She also expressed concern that trees are being cut down along the bypass for billboards which eliminates some the noise buffer created by the trees.

ADJOURNMENT – A motion by Nice, seconded by Miller, to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m. All aye votes.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle L. Reddick
Recording Secretary