

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

**MAY 13, 2019**

The regular meeting of the Upper Pottsgrove Planning Commission was held on Monday, May 13, 2019, at the Upper Pottsgrove Administrative Office, 1409 Farmington Avenue, with Elwood Taylor, John Ungerman, John Bealer, William Hewitt and Greg Churach present. Also present were Township Manager Michelle Reddick and County Planner John Miklos. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Taylor at 7:00 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – There were no minutes available for approval.

**KUMMERER TRACT SKETCH PLAN** – Jon Benson and Bo Erixson of Artisan Construction Company, LLC were present to discuss their proposal to develop an age qualified community on the Kummerer Tract which consists of 59 ½ acres located in the R-80 zoning district. J. Benson explained they are working with a national developer on this project. He further explained they are in the feasibility process, and their sketch plan calls for the construction of 172 lots/units which consists of 106 single family homes and 66 townhomes. Mr. Benson further explained there are no steep slopes on the property, a limited area of wetlands and two riparian buffers. He noted there are no specific areas shown on the sketch plan for storm water management. He explained they have submitted a zoning compliance plan and letter and are waiting for a zoning determination. He further explained the property is being developed under the age qualified ordinance which requires the following criteria: (1) entire property must be located in the R-80 zoning district; (2) the property must be at least 30 acres; (3) there must be 1,800 square feet of street frontage; and (4) the property must be located within 500 feet of Route 100. He noted their plan meets all the required criteria, and it is their understanding the land development plan is a by-right plan as no conditional use or variances are needed. He also noted they are willing to put the zoning determination letter on hold if the township is willing to meet with them to further discuss this project. In response to a question from E. Taylor, M. Reddick explained the zoning determination letter has not been issued so the review is a sketch plan review for informal feedback. In response to a question from W. Hewitt, J. Benson advised public water and sewer are being proposed. In response to another question from W. Hewitt, J. Benson advised a traffic count will be provided. In response to a question from G. Churach, J. Benson advised guest parking areas will be provided. In response to another question from G. Churach, J. Benson advised they are proposing no on-street parking. In response to questions from J. Bealer, J. Benson advised the homes will be under individual ownership, and the roads will be private through a homeowner's association and managed by a professional management company. In response to a question from G. Churach, J. Benson advised the engineer is conducting an economic feasibility study, and we anticipate the sale price of the homes to be \$300,000 or more. In response to another question from G. Churach, J. Benson advised the national builder does typically use local contractors. County Planner John Miklos advised he likes the way they are handling trails and riparian buffers. He noted he is interested to see how the storm water management and other subdivision and land

development requirements are handled. He also suggested the developer investigate the possibility of pocket parks within the development. Motion by W. Hewitt, second by J. Ungerman and unanimously carried to recommend to the Board of Commissioners they consider the proposal as the Planning Commission see this as a viable option for this property. In response to a question from G. Churach, J. Benson advised is all goes well, they anticipate breaking ground in the fall of this year. J. Benson also noted they would propose a widening and overlaying of Pineford Road in front of their property.

**REVIEW OF ALLOY 5 BUILDING STUDY** – E. Taylor noted the President of the Board of Commissioners has tasked the Planning Commission with reviewing the building study conducted by Alloy 5 and consider the next steps the township could take in meeting the recommendations on same. He explained the duties of the Planning Commission under the PA Municipalities Code are to prepare the comprehensive plan for the development of the municipality as set forth in the act and present it for consideration of the governing body and submit to the governing body a recommended capital improvements program. E. Taylor also noted concerns regarding government facilities and emergency services as outlined in the regional comprehensive plan. He referred to the section of the regional comp plan which states “the Region is generally well served by government facilities; however, some municipal buildings would benefit from modernization and expansion”. He outlined some of the key points in the regional comp plan which include: (1) the location of government facilities in the Region’s development centers can strengthen community identity; (2) new municipal buildings and other facilities provide a combination of government offices, meeting space, emergency services, libraries, and other public services; this is referred to as co-location and consolidates government services for the benefit of the public and improves costs and efficiency for the municipality; and (3) sharing of special emergency services equipment or technology should be investigated by the Pottstown region’s municipalities. He explained the original proposal by the Board of Commissioners was for a new public works building which was rejected as it was too expensive and did not consider the total of Township needs for facilities. He explained then the Board of Commissioners decided to hire Alloy 5 to conduct a study of our existing facilities. E. Taylor overviewed steps or considerations taken in the past by the Board of Commissioners over the years which included: (1) renovating the Fire Company building for an administrative department and public meeting room; (2) considering the purchase of a building on Willow Street which could not be agreed upon; (3) investigating if there was another suitable building or property to relocate the departments of which none were found; (4) contracting LTL to do a public works/police study of the current building to see if it could be renovated to meet the current and future needs of both buildings; and (5) considering the construction of a new public works facility. E. Taylor noted most of the items identified in the building study for both facilities were categorized as serious and should be addressed promptly or critical and should be addressed immediately. Mr. Taylor noted that Alloy 5 estimated the costs to completely renovate and enlarge Township facilities would cost approximately \$4,800,000. He suggested that the Township might want to consider other options for that amount of money, to include the construction of new buildings on existing Township properties as well as considering building at other potential locations. He presented examples showing potential building locations on

Township property as well as an example at a new location. This plan was for a new facility built by a contractor to house police, public works and administration on the 15-acre property located between Farmington Avenue and Route 100 across from Strogus Flowers. He indicated the proposed cost estimate would be \$4,875,000 and would provide potential access to Route 100 and commercial development via Commerce Drive. He noted the Fire Company would remain where it is located and use the space in the basement for their expansion needs. The Planning Commission reviewed the Alloy 5 building study. W. Hewitt expressed concern the existing buildings are aging and not worth repairing. G. Churach noted we are not going to have a solution overnight. He noted a decision needs to be made whether we are going to repair existing facilities or build a new facility. He further noted if we are going to consider a new facility, then we should evaluate how much we could sell our existing facilities for. He expressed concern the building study did not indicate if the fire facility is safe to house fire apparatus. He advised Limerick Township has a new municipal building and fire company. He further advised Lower Providence Township has a beautiful new facility, but ours does not have to be designed in the same fashion. E. Taylor noted the proposal in the study for a new facility did not include a fire company and suggested the township does not consider throwing money into a company that is not viable. J. Ungerman expressed concern that spending any money on the public works and police building is wasting money. Developer Rich Mingey advised he reviewed the proposed building study, and noted the existing facilities do not address safety, security, fire sprinklers and storm water controls. He suggested if a new facility is considered, the township consider solar panels on land rather than the roof of a building. G. Churach advised he is not in favor of constructing a new facility on the property proposed by Mr. Taylor. E. Taylor advised the recommendation of a new facility on that property is unique in that the proposal is to have the facility built on private property and then lease it to the township. W. Hewitt reiterated the existing buildings are not worth repairing. J. Ungerman suggested building a new facility or reconfiguring the public works building with a new facility for administration and police. It was the consensus of the Planning Commission that the Township's existing, 50-year old government buildings do not have adequate capacity and are too outdated to justify any expense that anticipates their continued use. Rather, the Planning Commission recommends the Board of Commissioners consider the construction of new buildings in configurations and locations that will maximize efficiency of service and energy savings and be able to meet the needs of the township for the next 50 years. The Planning Commission believes the Board of Commissioners should consider the creation of a master plan for all township facilities so that the expense for any incremental steps can be justified, including potential repairs, land purchase, construction, financing options, park planning, grant applications, or other opportunities associated with the implementation of the plan. The Planning Commission did not make a distinction concerning fire services. Being a private entity, the township may not justify its full integration/expense into a new facility/location. In that case, making the repairs recommended by Alloy 5 to the existing building could be justified as reasonable and included in the proposed master plan. If the administrative space in the basement of the fire building were then vacated to collocate another new facility, the space would more economically satisfy the additional needs of the Fire Company noted in the Alloy 5 report.

**ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS** – The Planning Commission reviewed the proposed ordinance amending various section of Chapter 310, subdivision and land development, and Chapter 350, Zoning, as amended to add additional definitions, to amend parking requirements for certain non-commercial uses, to allow minor subdivisions with certain conditions in the R-1 residential zoning district, and to amend plan processing procedures for subdivisions and land development. E. Taylor noted these proposed changes were originally recommended by the Planning Commission and have now been prepared in a formal ordinance and advertised for a public hearing. He explained as a matter of process, the proposed Ordinance must be reviewed by our Planning Commission and the Montgomery County Planning Commission. He further noted the County review letter was included in your packet. M. Reddick explained the County raised concerns the proposed revisions to Section 310-14.G describe the distribution of electronic copies of plans to township offices, but the specified quantities total to more than what the applicant is required to submit which could generate confusion regarding the submission of plans. M. Reddick further explained Solicitor Garner will come up with new language, but the change will not be substantive. She noted the Planning Commission can make a recommendation subject to the proposed change outlined in the County’s review letter. Motion by W. Hewitt, second by J. Ungerman and unanimously carried to recommend to the Board of Commissioners approval of the proposed ordinance amendments subject to the County’s review letter dated May 10, 2019.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – None.

**ADJOURNMENT** – Motion by J. Ungerman, second by W. Hewitt and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Michelle L. Reddick  
Recording Secretary/Planning & Zoning Administrator