

DERRY TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
March 7, 2017

CALL TO ORDER

The Tuesday, March 7, 2017 Derry Township Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. in the meeting room of the Derry Township Municipal Complex, 600 Clearwater Road, Hershey, PA, by Chairman Glenn Rowe.

ROLL CALL

Commission Members Present: Glenn Rowe, Chairman; Don Santostefano, Vice Chairman; Joyce St. John, Secretary; Matt Tunnell

Commission Member Absent: Ned Wehler

Also Present: Chuck Emerick, Director of Community Development; Brandon Williams, Assistant Director of Community Development; Diane Myers-Krug, Dauphin County Planning Commission representative; Jenelle Stumpf, Community Development Secretary

Public Registering Attendance: Corey Bray, Gannett Fleming, Inc.; Carolyn Stoner, Hershey Medical Center; Marvin Smith, Penn State Hershey; Charles Huth, *The Sun*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion made by Member Tunnell and seconded by Secretary St. John, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the minutes of the February 7, 2017 meeting, as written.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Review and recommendation of a waiver from filing a land development plan, as requested by Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center regarding two second floor additions to the main hospital building**

Chuck Emerick reported that the Medical Center is proposing a building infill project of 2,622 square feet of new floor area intended to serve as support and storage space for existing operating rooms. It is his understanding that presently much of the equipment necessary for operations is stored in the corridors on the operating wing. This infill will allow for proper storage of equipment and improved corridor circulation. The Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance requires a land development plan to be processed any time more than 2,500 square feet of new principal building is added to a property.

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Mr. Emerick noted that this project does not propose the addition of any new roads, sidewalks, employees, or parking areas; no new impervious area will be added to the site, so stormwater management will not be required; and nothing proposed will generate new traffic to the property. There is nothing to be gained from the processing of a land development plan for this project. Mr. Emerick suggested that the Planning Commission make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors that the requested waiver be granted.

Diane Myers-Krug, Dauphin County Planning Commission representative, stated that consistent with past reviews of plan processing waivers and based on their solicitor's opinion, they do not support the processing of the waiver, citing the definition of 'land development' in the Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and PA Municipalities Planning Code and believing that if the project is a land development, then a plan must be processed. Mr. Emerick added that the Township's solicitor views the matter differently and believes such a waiver can be granted.

Vice Chairman Santostefano commented that the applicant could have separated the projects to avoid having to request the waiver, based on the square footage. Carolyn Stoner, Hershey Medical Center, stated that they intend to construct the additions at different times but they will serve the same purpose and are part of one project.

MOTION

On a motion made by Member Tunnell, seconded by Secretary St. John, and a unanimous vote, the Planning Commission made a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors that the waiver be granted.

B. Review and recommendation of Ordinance No. 686, which would amend the Code of the Township of Derry by establishing Chapter 89 (Downtown Core Design Standards)

Brandon Williams stated that Ordinance No. 686 has been prepared in response to the implementation strategies that have been outlined in the 2015 Township Comprehensive Plan, which include the following actions:

- Establish an updated Development Review process of administrative procedures and application requirements utilizing the Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) legislation of the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) and in an effort to streamline development review and approvals in the Township.
- Revise current design guidelines for the Chocolate Avenue corridor that include the identification of predominant architecture, a listing of desirable building materials, and provide for criteria that standardize building scale, mass, setback relationships to the street, and design and screening of parking areas and other private site elements.

The proposed Design Standards chapter of the Code of the Township of Derry would supplement the Zoning Ordinance by creating criteria related to exterior design of buildings, including materials, scale and mass, and design of private site elements, including, but not limited to, accessory buildings,

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fences, walls, and utilities. The regulations provide standards for how buildings interact with and connect to public sidewalks and spaces within the downtown.

Mr. Williams noted that since this is a standalone chapter of the codification and is separate from the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code contains no requirement that the Dauphin County Planning Commission must review the Ordinance. The County Planning Commission was consulted and they provided confirmation that no review is necessary.

Secretary St. John noted that the regulations require developers of large projects to provide a lot of information on the design of their proposal for the initial review. She asked if there will be a process in place for Township staff to work with the developer prior to submission to guide them in the right direction and to avoid the developer having to spend a lot of money on a design that does not fit the vision of what is desired for the downtown. Mr. Williams responded that there are no requirements for this to take place, but staff already tries to meet with the developer prior to submission. Secretary St. John thinks the developer should be made aware that it is a good idea to sit down with staff prior to submission so they know what is expected. Mr. Williams believes that the process will be better defined under the proposed standards because lists of specific materials are included instead of just a suggestion that the materials of the proposal are consistent with neighboring properties.

Vice Chairman Santostefano commented that this looks like a historic architectural review board document. Mr. Williams stated that it is similar; however, it is not as restrictive about the demolition of existing buildings. This Ordinance is endeavoring to focus more on the traditional neighborhood design standards under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code than the historical aspect because those standards are more compatible with the surroundings in the downtown. Vice Chairman Santostefano agreed that this is a good thing because it results in the entire area looking nicer. He also thinks it is beneficial that there is enough subjectivity in the proposed Ordinance so that the regulations are not very rigid. The board members will have some latitude to make reasonable decisions.

Secretary St. John likes that the proposed standards emphasize the importance of design elements within the street level view, such as first floor windows, awnings, sidewalks, and plantings.

Chairman Rowe stated that he appreciates the section regarding the required minimum height of new buildings because that has sometimes been a struggle with developers. He inquired about how a one-story building will appear if it is required to be constructed to a minimum height of 35 feet. Mr. Williams responded that there are ways to add height to a building without adding a second story; however, there is room for flexibility in the standards regarding this requirement.

Chairman Rowe asked if Section 89-13 (Design standards for signs and awnings) is intended more for the main commercial sign that motorists see, since Section 89-13.A.(3) states that messages containing lettering or font sizes that are one inch or less are not required to meet the dimensional criteria. He asked if signs containing one inch lettering, which is difficult to see at a distance, are desirable. Mr. Williams stated that most entities would try to maximize their signage and lettering, but there are certain instances where smaller text is necessary because of numerous tenant names on one sign.

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Secretary St. John asked at what point an owner of a grandfathered building or sign in the downtown must comply with the proposed design standards, if they want to make modifications to their structure. Mr. Williams responded that any exterior alteration or material change, with the exception of message or color changes to an existing sign panel, would have to be reviewed by the Downtown Core Design Board if the structure is located on Chocolate Avenue or if it is one of the more intense uses on Caracas Avenue.

MOTION

On a motion made by Vice Chairman Santostefano, seconded by Secretary St. John, and a unanimous vote, the Planning Commission made a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors that Ordinance No. 686 be adopted, with the incorporation of the revisions documented in Mr. Williams' March 3, 2017 e-mail to the Commission.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Member Tunnell, seconded by Vice Chairman Santostefano, and a unanimous vote, the meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce St. John
Planning Commission Secretary

Submitted by:

Jenelle Stumpf
Community Development Secretary (*stenographer*)