

MINUTES
UPPER SAUCON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, February 2, 2016 – 6:30 p.m.
Township Municipal Building

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Falcone called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present: **Samantha Falcone, Chair**
 Gerry Anthony, Vice-Chair
 Alfred Cancellieri
 Bryan Macfarlane
 Antonio Roman
 Rod Chirumbolo

Staff Attending: **Trisha Lang, Secretary/Director of Community Development**
 Thomas Dinkelacker, Township Solicitor
 Kevin Chimics, Township Engineer

Minutes

The minutes of the October 6, 2015 meeting were approved with Mr. Macfarlane and Mr. Chirumbolo abstaining.

The minutes of the January 5, 2016 meeting were unanimously approved.

Subdivision and Land Development Reviews

Kay Landis Mill Subdivision project – review of design for Open Space

The applicant, represented by Mr. Richard Brooks and Mr. Fred Jackson, was in attendance to present a design and request feedback from the Planning Commission for the common open space acreage of the proposed development. Prior to the start of the presentation, staff advised the Commission members of the design criteria found in Section 427 of the Zoning Ordinance, as well as the distinction between the requirement to provide common open space [from the Zoning Ordinance] and the Park and Recreation requirements [from the SALDO].

A series of slides outlining the intended design of the 40+ acres of common open space was provided and narrated by Mr. Jackson. Following the slide presentation, the Commission members posed some questions related to the following issues:

- Options for ownership/maintenance of the area - *these are outlined in both the SALDO and the ZO.*
- Intended connection to the Epernay project across Landis Mill Road – *a connection to the walkways in Epernay is proposed.*

- How the design of the open space impacted design of the residential portion of the project – *the ordinance requires the integration of the common open space with the residential development of the site. Therefore, the layout of the trail network through the residential portion of the site which establishes connection to the open space amenities and the adjacent Township parkland is the key feature related to the residentially developed portion of the site.*
- The intended material of the pathway network and maintenance costs and responsibilities for same – *these elements are currently unknown. It will depend on whether the acreage is offered for dedication and accepted by the Township and what is environmentally appropriate.*
- The sufficiency of the width of the proposed bridge linking the project to the existing Township Park - *the proposed width is 10' which is the same as the bridges on the Saucon Rail Trail.*

It was noted that the plan is still conceptual and that a full engineering review as well as review by the Lehigh County Conservation District would be necessary prior to any approval of the project. The Commission was generally supportive of the preservation of the allee, as well as the potential inclusion of interpretive stations within the floodplain and riparian buffer areas.

The discussion was then opened up to the public in attendance. Issues raised by the public included the following:

- A concern for the safety of pedestrians crossing Landis Mill Road was raised – *it was noted that a crossing of Landis Mill Road would be subject to PaDOT design requirements and permit approval.*
- A question regarding a limit on the amount of floodplain incorporated into the common open space was posed – *the ordinance's lack of such restriction was identified.*
- The issue of maintenance responsibilities and costs was raised – *as noted previously, the responsibility and associated costs will depend on whether or not the acreage is offered for dedication to the Township or whether an HOA is created for this purpose.*
- Motor vehicle access to the portion of the trail located within the proposed allee was questioned – *the applicant's representative indicated that this area would not be open to motor vehicle traffic.*
- A concern about the bridge design and the ability of bikes to cross due to the steep approach was identified – *the bridge design has not yet been engineered. This feature will be evaluated at that time. Bike riders may need to dismount to cross*
- The need for any extension of the existing trail network was questioned and a concern for who these trails would serve was expressed – *the trail system and connection to the trails in the existing Township park are identified on the Township's adopted Official Map and are intended to serve existing and proposed residents of the Township; facilitating their access to the park, the rail trail, and the library.*
- Use of and parking for the proposed interpretative stations was questioned; the concept of vehicles parking in the lot currently available in the existing park was thought to be unrealistic – *it was noted that the interpretative stations which provide an educational element to the park were not intended to create a destination but were merely an amenity that could be removed from the concept plan if parking is anticipated to be an issue.*

- The developer's intention regarding the existing barn on the property was questioned due to its presumed historical value – *representatives for the developer indicated that the historical value would be evaluated but that the present intent was to terminate use of the barn.*
- A problem with existing flooding/drainage issues in the vicinity of the site was raised – *it was noted that, at present, calculations show that the existing drainage issues would not be negatively impacted by the proposed development.*
- A concern for the design of the bike/pedestrian path along Old Bethlehem Pike was identified and the actual use of the proposed trail system (vs. the intended use) was also questioned – *it was noted that the path along OBP would not encroach on either the existing cartway or the adjacent lots and would include a grass area between the path and the roadway similar to that provided for the Traditions of America project on Lanark and Hopewell Roads. In addition, the importance of the incremental linkage of the trail network to other areas of the Township was identified.*
- A question regarding the preservation of trees shown on the Open Space plan was raised – *the applicant's representatives indicated the intent to retain the Honey Locust and Sycamore trees as well as vegetation surrounding the out-parcel on Landis Mill Road.*

There being no more discussion, the presentation was concluded and no action was taken on the proposed design.

Official Map Update

Staff identified the reason for the proposed update/amendments to Official Map components #2 and #3, and briefly identified a list of examples of where and how the maps had been revised. After a short discussion, the Commission recommended adoption of the revised maps and suggested that the Township update these documents on a more frequent and regular basis. A time frame of at least every three years was mentioned as appropriate.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Environmental Advisory Council

Mr. Roman reported on the first EAC meeting of the year. The meeting included a reorganization of members as well as discussion about the goals for 2016. The group hopes to continue to continue its educational efforts and to expand its presence on social media.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 1, 2016, at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Lang,
Secretary