

**BIRMINGHAM TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

January 8, 2008

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman, Nick DiMarino at 7:30 p.m. at the Birmingham Township Building. The following Township Officials were in attendance:

Nick DiMarino	Chairman, Planning Commission
Chris Bailey	Member, Planning Commission
Scott Boorse	Member, Planning Commission
Janet Decaestecker	Member, Planning Commission
Eric Hawkins	Vice Chairman Planning Commission
Debbie Hineman	Planning Commission Member,
Douglas Marshall	Planning Commission Member,
Scott Towler	Member, Planning Commission
Frone Crawford	Solicitor, Planning Commission
Andrew McReynolds	Solicitor, Planning Commission
Karen McFadden	Secretary, Planning Commission

Absent was Planning Commission Member, Peter Davenport.

ORGANIZATION OF PLANNING COMMISSION FOR 2008

Mr. DiMarino explained that elections for the various Planning Commission posts are required at the first meeting of the New Year. With that in mind Mr. Scott Boorse nominated Mr. Nicholas DiMarino to serve as Chairman of the Planning Commission for 2008, Mr. DiMarino accepted the nomination and Ms. Hineman seconded. Mr. DiMarino was unanimously elected as Chairman of the Planning Commission.

Mr. DiMarino proceeded to nominate Mr. Eric Hawkins as Vice Chairman. Mr. Hawkins accepted the nomination and it was seconded by Ms. Hineman. Mr. Hawkins was unanimously elected Vice-chairman.

Mr. DiMarino nominated Mr. Peter Davenport to serve as the Planning Commission Liaison with HARB, commenting that since he is not present he would have the opportunity to decline if he was unable to fill the role. Ms. Hineman seconded the nomination and Mr. Davenport was unanimously elected as Liaison to HARB.

Mr. DiMarino nominated Mr. Scott Boorse to continue as Intergovernmental Liaison. Mr. Boorse accepted the nomination. It was seconded and Mr. Boorse was unanimously approved as Intergovernmental Liaison.

REVISION TO NOVEMBER 13, 2007 MINUTES

Mr. DiMarino explained that Mr. Al Bush had brought to his attention that the November minutes in the section regarding Zoning District Review that the second sentence referring to Sandy Hollow and the Township building, should be amended to read : ***Both of these areas are zoned RA.***

APPROVAL OF December 11, 2007 MINUTES

Mr. DiMarino suggested the following revisions to the minutes for the December 11, 2007 meeting. In the section regarding the Carousel Hyundai Sketch Plan, the eighth sentence in the first paragraph be revised to read: *Mr. Hawkins (replacing Mr. Hatfield) expressed concern that the basin would not accommodate the drainage.* Mr. DiMarino also suggested that the eleventh sentence in the first paragraph of the Carousel Hyundai section be revised to read: *A plan would take into account drainage of all properties currently drained and would keep water underground.* As an additional comment Mr. DiMarino asked that an addition be made to the 15th sentence regarding impervious cover that reads: *Scott Towler asked about the increase in impervious cover, which (the applicant stated) would be at 72.5%. The addition requested is: (after further investigation it was determined that the impervious cover would be 81% for both properties).* Lastly Mr. DiMarino requested that the following be added at the end of the second paragraph of the Carousel Hyundai section: *Mr. DiMarino also stated that spending money on engineering is very high risk expenditure at this point.* Ms. Hineman motioned that the minutes from the December 11th meeting be approved with the aforementioned revisions. The motion was seconded, (approved all in favor). Planning Commission Member, Douglas Marshall abstained since he was not present at the December meeting.

PLANNING COMMISSION OBJECTIVES FOR 2008

Mr. DiMarino suggested several initiatives that could be considered as possible objectives for the Planning Commission to undertake for 2008. He mentioned that Al Bush has brought to his attention that there may be an error with the scale of the official township map. It was suggested that the Planning Commission might look at the possibilities of any properties in the township that might be of interest if they ever came up for sale. This might include properties that would have historic or recreational value to the township. Mr. DiMarino went on to suggest a continued refinement of the process for plans that are coming before the Planning Commission. He also suggested that a Planning Commission Member should attend the Supervisor meetings. He mentioned a continuation of the review of zoning districts. Mr. Doug Marshall suggested that the commission review the comprehensive plan to insure that the commission is moving in the right direction and on track for the future. Ms. Debbie Hineman mentioned the Historic Committee for historic review. She recalled that a recommendation had been sent to the Supervisors but not aware of the current status. Mr. DiMarino said that he would follow that up with the supervisors. Mr. DiMarino asked the commission members to send other suggestions to him via e-mail.

REVIEW ZONING DISTRICTS

The discussion opened with a question From Mr. Marshall. Does everyone have the same map, dated 1998. Mr. DiMarino replied that there had been a complete zoning revision in April 2003. Scott Boorse commented that there have been zoning changes along 202. There is C1, C2, C3, C2A. It is a mixed bag on 202, Mr. Boorse commented and asked if there is an issue with that. Mr. Crawford responded that it was worth review to bring consistency and to possibly reduce to 2-3 commercial zones. Discussion

continued regarding how the various classifications were established. Big Box uses were a concern in the past. Mr. Crawford stated that he doesn't believe there is the land for a Big Box. There are various limitations that can be introduced such as limitations on the size of any building; land coverage can also be used. Breaks in façade and roof line can be required.

Mr. DiMarino suggested a look at zoning parcel by parcel and uses in various districts. Mr. Marshall relayed that in his review of the zoning districts he found that it did not lay out easily on a matrix, it was haphazard.

Mr. Hawkins brought up Historical Commercial Space and suggested that all commercial space should be included in the review. Discussion continued about property in the flood plain that might come available for sale as passive recreation area. Eric Hawkins suggested that Parks and Open Space Commission be invited to participate in the discussion.

Mr. DiMarino recapped the areas that would be considered as part of the review of zoning districts:

- Potential Properties that the Township may have interest in purchasing
- Matrix of uses in zoning districts
- Institutional District – Rondelay Estate and Roundelay Drive
- Sandy Hollow /Township Building zoned RA

Discussion ensued regarding the past situation where the township building and Sandy Hollow had to deal with the RA zoning when additional parking was needed. Nick DiMarino asked Mr. Crawford for his advice on the best way to go on this municipal zoning. Mr. Crawford suggested that it would be far more prudent to have it zoned with regulations as you would like them, but to completely exempt the township could be perceived as an abuse of power. Ms. Hineman stated that the township building should be zoned in such a way that we can operate under the law. The township should not become a bad neighbor. Mr. Crawford will look at possibilities to address parking at each location (Township Building and Sandy Hollow). The Planning Commission will look to make a recommendation to the Supervisors.

Eric Hawkins suggested that as part of a comprehensive zoning review that HARB and the supervisors as well as other members of the community be invited to talk about where we should be in 30 years. Make an effort to anticipate what the future might bring. With the widening of 202 what will the impact be on the commercial district. Mr. Hawkins also suggested that RA zoning in the flood plain be reviewed. Beyond zoning, get developmental rights at a very low cost, talk to property owners and get easements. Mr. Crawford suggested that these properties be added to the official map as public open space, best dealt with through conservation easement. Mr. Hawkins suggested that the Brandywine Conservancy would have advice and input on the flood plain, historical preservation and stream study.

WEST CHESTER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Mr. DiMarino suggested to the commission the continued participation and membership in the West Chester Regional Planning Commission at an annual cost of \$400.00 to be approved by the Planning Commission. Mr. Hawkins motioned to continue membership in the WCRPC and the motion was seconded by Mr. Marshall. It was approved all in favor. The commission unanimously recommended Scott Boorse to continue as the representative to the Regional Planning Commission with Chris Bailey as his alternate.

OTHER BUSINESS

Eric Hawkins explained that the Brandywine Battlefield Task Force meeting that was scheduled to last month was postponed due to inclement weather; and is rescheduled for later in the winter. They are looking at preservation on a regional level and preparing to make recommendations for townships about what they can do.

With no further discussion Mr. DiMarino called for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Hineman so motioned and the meeting was adjourned at 8:48(ND)