

East Hanover Township Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
June 20, 2024

Members:

*Thomas Ehrhart
*Justin Beamesderfer
*Marvin Smith
*Dennis Grubb
*Kenneth Moyer

*= Present for the meeting

Others Present:

Erik Harmon, Township Manager
John Poff, Township Engineer, Light-Heigel & Associates, Inc.
Steve Dellinger, Township Planner, Hanover Engineering
Colleen Gallo, Township Solicitor

The meeting was held in person at the Ono Fire Station and was called to order at 7:30 pm.

Minutes from the previous meeting (May 16, 2024) were approved.

Public Comments: None.

New Business: None.

Old Business: None

Other Business:

- **Comprehensive Plan Update:** At their April 2024 meeting, the Board of Supervisors deferred decision on adopting the draft Comprehensive Plan, pending additional review and discussion. The June 2024 Planning Commission meeting was held at the Ono Fire Station in order to accommodate larger public attendance. Several township residents and landowners attended to hear the discussion and provide recommendations on the future land use map.
 - The Township Solicitor, Colleen Gallo, also attended. She informed the attendees that the Planning Commission meeting was not a formal public hearing but was an opportunity for the Planning Commission to further review the draft Comprehensive Plan and have interactive discussions with attendees. She also stated that the Board of Supervisors would not be formally considering the proposed Comprehensive Plan update until the August meeting, or later.
 - Mr. Steve Dellinger provided an overview of the Comprehensive Plan review and update process. He stressed that the Comprehensive Plan is a planning guidance document, not a legal document like an ordinance. He provided some info on the process the Township used to send out surveys to landowners and gather input from them. The Township sent out approximately 1,000 surveys in early 2023 and received ~15% return rate. The themes from the responses were to keep the rural character of the Township, preserve agricultural and natural areas, and limit development. Respondents indicated that some of the things that detract from the Township are industrial and warehouse development. After the survey, the Planning Commission reviewed the 2019

Comprehensive Plan and, as part of the review, considered criteria and areas which might be more appropriate for any warehouse type development (i.e., Industrial zoning). The Planning Commission goals included limiting industrial development in prime farm land and locating zoning for such development closest to major traffic routes and intersections. Therefore, the Planning Commission's proposed future land use map indicated additional Industrial zoning next to the Route 934 and Interstate 81 interchange.

- Mr. George Christianson, an attorney representing several Township land owners, provided comments that currently, there is little industrial zoning in the Township, and it is located between Route 22 and I-81. The property owners he represents would like the industrial zoning to be expanded at that location. The aggregate size of the lots recommended for Industrial zoning is 189 acres, of which 135 would be developable.
- Mr. Christianson introduced Mike Lusaitis, an engineer from Steckbeck Engineering & Surveying. Mr. Lusaitis provided handouts and reviewed a map showing the proposed properties. He also displayed a map showing how much of the Planning Commission proposed Industrial zoning area (at Rte. 934) would be available for development per his assumptions and calculations. The total acreage is 204 acres but Mr. Lusaitis indicated that only 37 acres would be developable. Mr. Lusaitis indicated that per an e-mail from the Fort Indiantown Gap Communications Director, the Gap is not currently interested in selling or leasing any state property for warehouse development. He also calculated that any floodplain acreage would not be used or available for development. He also reduced the developable area by taking out the Right of Way acreage around the I-81 interchange. Mr. Lusaitis mentioned that "81 is the main bloodline for trucks" and the area they proposed for industrial zoning would limit traffic to I-81 and state roads. Perhaps the only Township road that would be affected would be Bullfrog Road.
- Mr. Smith asked Mr. Lusaitis about using some of the floodplain area for parking and driveways. Mr. Lusaitis replied that it would be difficult to do so without extensive permitting.
- Mr. Harmon, Township Manager, stated that he had a conversation with the Fort Indiantown Gap Real Estate office and the proposed Commercial zoning that includes state property at Fort Indiantown Gap was at their request. And that it is possible that the state (i.e., Department of Military and Veteran Affairs) would consider leasing land in the future.
- Mr. Ehrhart asked if all the property owners in the proposed area for Industrial zoning are in favor. Mr. Christianson stated that most are and they are working on getting additional letters of support.
- Mr. Grubb asked about the location of the high-voltage electrical transmission lines. The reply was that those lines are adjacent to I-81 and the impact on development would be minimal.
- Mr. Harmon mentioned that the discussion was focusing on warehouses as the development of any industrial areas. However, the industrial zoning would also allow other types of development such as truck depots, etc. These other types of development could have significant traffic impacts on local roads.
- Mr. Dellinger asked how much of the proposed 189 acres is prime agricultural land or soils of statewide importance. Mr. Lusaitis replied that he did not have that information.
- Mr. Christianson provided a summary asking the Planning Commission to consider what has been zoned industrial in the past and to expand industrial zoning as requested. He also mentioned that the proposal has landowner support. He stated that the area that the Planning Commission recommends for industrial zoning is not realistic. Mr. Christianson recommends the Planning Commission revise the future land use map and provide a revised recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.
- Mr. Ehrhart asked for input from Planning Commission members. Mr. Smith stated that the goals of the Planning Commission, which included providing industrial zoning close to I-81, as the "main

bloodline for trucks” is a sound comprehensive planning approach. Additionally, the industrial uses should not just be near the interstate but should be as close as possible to the existing interchange to the interstate. A motion was made, seconded, and approved that the Planning Commission is in favor of the Future Land Use map as originally proposed to the Board of Supervisors, and the Commission does not recommend any changes to the proposed Future Land Use Map.

Parking Requirements / Stabilized Turf: The Commission continued discussion on whether the use of stabilized turf for parking areas should be part of the Township ordinance. The Commission also discussed the potential need to revise the current ordinance relating to parking schedules (i.e., determining the required number of spaces), particularly for infrequent parking use. Mr. Dellinger will prepare draft language for future review.

Elder Housing and Accessory Dwelling Units: The Commission continued reviewed the Zoning Ordinance related to Section 250-242, Accessory Apartments, and Section 250- 246, Elder Cottage Housing. Mr. Dellinger previously provided draft language for consideration. The Planning Commission will review the information and provide input for any recommended changes at the next meeting. Some of the aspects being considered include: requiring the principle dwelling to be owner occupied; whether the occupants of the Elder Housing or Accessory unit must be related to the owner/occupant of the primary dwelling unit; whether Elder Housing must be removed when no longer occupied by eligible persons; and in which zoning districts should these uses should be considered.

- The Commission previously deferred discussion of several topics to a future meeting. These include Transportation Studies and Official Map Development; No-Impact Home Businesses; I-81 Proposed Development and Intermodal Truck Parking; Microbreweries/Distilleries/Wineries; Bulk Water Extraction; Industrial Hemp; Natural Gas Compressor Stations; Traffic Impact Fees – Updated Study, updating fence regulations, and revisions to parking lot requirements to address the use of stabilized turf.

Monthly Zoning Permits Review: The Commission reviewed the list of zoning/building permits issued (5) since the previous meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm.