



UPPER UWCHLAN TOWNSHIP
Planning Commission Meeting
June 8, 2023
7:00 p.m. Meeting
Minutes
Approved
September 14, 2023

LOCATION: Township Building, 140 Pottstown Pike, Chester Springs PA 19425

Attendees:

Joe Stoyack, Vice-Chair; Chad Adams (via telephone), David Colajezzi, Jim Dewees, Jeff Smith
MaryLou Lowrie, P.E., Gilmore & Associates
Gwen Jonik, Planning Commission Secretary

Absent: Stephen Fearn, Ravi Mayreddy, Sally Winterton

Joe Stoyack called the Meeting to order at 7:00 PM as a quorum was present. There were 2 citizens in attendance.

Chester County Parks & Facilities Conditional Use and Land Development Plan, and Natural Lands Trust Conditional Use Plan

Ari Christakis, Esq., Buckley Brion McGuire & Morris, is representing both the County and Natural Lands Trust for the 2 conditional uses and the County's land development plan. Nick Feola of Bursich Associates and Dave Stauffer, the County's Director of Parks and Preservation, and Jack Stefferud of Natural Lands Trust were in attendance.

The County had submitted in May 2019 a conditional use application to allow municipal use (Township Code Section 200.44.I.(10) of property zoned Limited Industrial (LI) to extend the Struble Trail from its current terminus, cross Dorlan Mill Road, and connect with Marsh Creek State Park. The Planning Commission had favored the Application in July 2019 and for a variety of reasons, COVID being one of them, the Application did not move forward to a Hearing. Following many extensions granted by the County, the Application is before the Township for review and approval. In the meantime, Natural Lands Trust has purchased property the Trail will traverse, and they have submitted a conditional use application seeking the same – municipal use. Once the Trail is constructed over Natural Lands' property, they'll give the property to the State.

The County has submitted revised preliminary/final land development plans for construction of the Trail.

Joe Stoyack summarized what was being requested of the Planning Commission tonight: recommendations for the Board of Supervisors for Natural Lands Trust's conditional use application, the County's conditional use application, and the County's preliminary/final land development plan.

Mr. Christakis noted the conditional hearings and land development plan approval are scheduled to be heard by the Board of Supervisors at their June 19, 2023 meeting. A waiver has been requested to allow the land development plan to be combined preliminary and final.

Mr. Feola provided a brief overview of the changes to the plan since the 2019 submission. Retaining walls had been needed along a portion of the Trail, but with Natural Lands acquiring 2.7-acre parcel, the County can shift the trail further into the site, which allows for additional buffering between the trail and the Shryock property and the grading is better, eliminating the retaining walls. The miller's house and garage have been demolished.

David Colajezzi called attention to the Historical Commission's recommendations regarding conditions for approving the land development plan, including preserving as much of the historical structures as possible or creating a stone outline of the miller's house foundation. Placing a historical marker or plaque was also recommended. Mr. Feola advised that Natural Lands will remove the stairs that led to the house, to accommodate the road crossing. Mr. Christakis noted the County and Natural Lands will coordinate with the Township regarding the historical marker.

Dave Stauffer noted the trail goes through the 2.7-acre parcel and meets a trail in Marsh Creek State Park; this is a trail connection. Nick Feola advised the storm water management is proposing a trench and drain. There were no issues from Gilmore & Associates. The County will check with PennDOT regarding the Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP) to cross the road and the signal permit. They will comply with all other Township ordinances, except for the requested waiver.

Joe Stoyack returned to the preservation of the existing walls in the front and back of the where the house was, and the step. Jack Stefferud advised they'll leave the back wall, but the front wall and stairs need to be removed to grade out the trail. The foundation has been removed and the State is not interested in an outline of the foundation, considered a structure, being created. A plaque on the trail is allowable.

Commission members asked if it would be allowed if the Township agrees to maintain a foundation outline. Mr. Christakis does not know what the State would think about that but suggested the Township contact DCNR as that's not in the County's or Natural Lands' purview.

Gerry Stein, Greenridge Road resident, inquired who maintains the ruins further south along the Struble Trail. Mr. Stauffer advised that the Dowlin Forge ruins are owned by Uwchlan Township and they, or their Historical Commission, maintain it.

Steve Egnaczyk, Stonehedge resident, asked if the stair stones/materials can be used elsewhere. Mr. Stauffer advised they could save the stair materials and front stone wall materials for the township to repurpose elsewhere; that is up to the Township.

Cathy Tomlinson, N. Reeds Road resident suggested those materials could be added to the footings left over from the train bed on N. Reeds Road, also part of the Park.

Discussion included: for conditional uses, if the applicant can show they can meet all zoning ordinances, the applicant is entitled to their conditional use approval; the Planning Commission provides recommendations to the Board and the Board decides approval, approval with conditions, or denial; perhaps an alternative set of stairs could access the plateau where the house stood; it is believed that DCNR isn't interested in ruins due to insurance reasons; it was suggested the Commission not recommend approval this evening and investigate creating ruins of the house first.

Jim Dewees moved, seconded by Jeff Smith, to recommend the approval of Natural Lands Trust's conditional use application. The motion carried unanimously.

Jeff Smith moved, seconded by Jim Dewees, to recommend the approval of the County's conditional use application, to extend the Struble Trail. The motion carried unanimously.

Jim Dewees moved, seconded by Jeff Smith, to recommend granting the waiver for the land development plan to be combined Preliminary/Final. The motion carried unanimously.

Joe Stoyack moved, seconded by Jeff Smith, to recommend Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan approval to Chester County's "Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan Struble Trail – Extension II" dated May 1, 2019 and last revised May 17, 2023, as presented, with the following recommendations:

1. Applicant to preserve the retaining wall that was in back of the Dorlan Mill miller's house;
2. That the Township work with the Commonwealth/DCNR to preserve the remaining structures as best as possible per the Historical Commission's February 2023 recommendations, at the Township's expense, potentially obtaining permission to build a low stone wall outlining the Dorlan Mill miller's house foundation;
3. Stone materials that may be removed during the Trail construction process be offered to the Township;
4. That the Township craft and install an interpretative sign/plaque where the house stood.

The motion carried unanimously.

Eagleview Corporate Center Lot 1A Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan

Neal Fisher of the Hankin Group reiterated the project, which proposes a 60,000 SF flexible building (office, lab, R&D, warehouse, etc.) on Lot 1A, a 13.5-acre parcel accessed from the Arrowhead Drive cul-de-sac. The consultants' review letters were very clean. They will show future parking; they currently show the trail terminating at Arrowhead Drive but that will eventually connect with a trail plan on Arrowhead Drive. The trail plan will move along quicker than the building construction. The Board of Supervisors had previously granted the requested waivers following the Planning Commission's recommendations. They will comply with everything in Gilmore's May 30, 2023 review letter. They do not yet have a tenant and no timeframe for building. The architectural lighting wasn't included as that will be determined once there is a tenant and they know where the entrances, etc. will be located.

Jeff Smith moved, seconded by Jim Dewees, to recommend to Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan approval. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Jeff Smith moved, seconded by Jim Dewees, to approve as presented the minutes of the Planning Commission's April 13, 2023 meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

David Colajezzi moved, seconded by Jeff Smith, to approve as presented the minutes of the Planning Commission's May 11, 2023 meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Meeting Updates

Environmental Advisory Council (EAC). There was no update as the June meeting had been cancelled.

Historical Commission (HC). David Colajezzi reported the HC met June 6 and topics of discussion were the August 3 summer walking tour, in which the HC is participating, and volunteers are needed; the historic resource inventory update is in progress.

Joe Stoyack noted that at the next HC meeting, after tonight's discussions regarding the Dorlan Mill ruins, we need to move along with an historic preservation ordinance. David Colajezzi and Jim Dewees will attend the HC's July 10 meeting to assist.

Gerry Stein noted that current protections are only in the Village Concept Plan but the rest of the township is unprotected. Joe Stoyack reiterated that we need to turn the Village Design Guidelines into design standards within the ordinances.

Chad Adams suggested we invite the Township Solicitor or Brandywine Conservancy to a Commission workshop to work on those ordinances.

Active Transportation Plan (ATP). Gwen Jonik noted a public workshop was held in May at the Pickering Valley Elementary School and residents have provided good feedback from that workshop and the public survey. They are scheduled to meet June 13.

Joe Stoyack announced the next Commission meeting, July 13. No 6:00 p.m. Workshop.

Open Session

Gwen Jonik reminded everyone the 13th Annual Block Party is June 17, 2023.

Adjournment

Jim Dewees moved to adjourn at 8:41 p.m. Everyone seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen A. Jonik
Planning Commission Secretary