



UPPER UWCHLAN TOWNSHIP

Planning Commission

December 12, 2024

6:00 p.m. Workshop

7:00 p.m. Meeting

Minutes

Approved

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

Attendees:

Sally Winterton, Chair; Joe Stoyack, Vice-Chair; Chad Adams, David Colajezzi, Jim Dewees, Jessica Wilhide, Taylor Young
Gwen Jonik, Planning Commission Secretary

Invited Guests: Lisa Thomas and Chris Garrity of RGS Associates

Absent: Stephen Fean, Jeff Smith

Sally Winterton called the Workshop to order at 6:00 p.m. There were 3 citizens in attendance.

Ordinance review – landscaping, screening

Lisa Thomas and Chris Garrity of RGS Associates were invited to attend the Workshop to assist with the review and discussion of the landscaping, buffering, screening regulations. Sally Winterton expressed concerns with trees alongside roadways, whether dead (ash) or not. Recent windstorms have toppled trees, some damaging structures and vehicles, and one incident took a life this last week. The Township shouldn't plant or require trees to be planted along roads, sidewalks or near power lines. While trees in the right-of-way or along roads are typically the property owner's responsibility, PECO has responsibility vertically above their lines. The Township could advise landowners of their responsibility, puts the onus on them, if the tree could fall in the right-of-way or on the road. Choose an appropriate tree for a streetscape, for aesthetics and beauty.

We asked RGS to assist us with the number and types of plantings for our requirements. Neal Fisher noted that in some of the older developments, the trees that were planted 40 years ago are too big now; taking 1 tree down, how many are needed to replace it? Most scenarios, you can't physically accommodate what's required, or they're too close and need to be thinned. In the Planned Industrial / Office zoning district, Hankin has planted fewer trees but of larger calipers.

Discussion continued and included:

- older growth trees are usually junk, not specimen trees, that are a mess as they age;
- we don't need to plant buffers between buildings within the same zoning district, but between different zones, yes.
- older trees also block the view of buildings from the street
- our ordinances don't allow for the growth of the tree/shrub – we have to be aware of that
- for commercial streetscapes, keep in mind a tree well and a 6' sidewalk, but maintain visibility so shoppes can succeed.
- Perhaps each zoning district needs its own regulations.
- Is there software that shows 3D views Plans so one could see how the landscaping truly looks?
- They use 3D for presentations, but not as a requirement by a Municipality.
- Perhaps change our ordinance to requires less trees but 'good' specimen trees.

- Perhaps leave our regulations as is and continue to consider waiver requests; usually the result is a reasonable agreement.
- We want to keep streetscapes fairly consistent.
- Let's start with plant types – trees, shrubs, grasses, etc., and quantities.
- Native vs. non-native; invasive plant list.
- Add allowing 'alternative' landscaping that benefits the property and streetscape?

The Commission members are to provide input of properties they like -- with adequate, attractive landscaping -- or those that are overcrowded, not pleasing to the eye, or interfere with sight distance. Provide those thoughts to Gwen to be forwarded to Chris at RGS.

Gwen is to ask our Solicitor about a fee in lieu of plantings, or planting elsewhere in the Township, and also check the Village Transportation Plan to see if streetscapes were included.

Lisa and Chris will think through the points discussed this evening before returning to a Workshop. If there are projects the Commission finds successful, send them to Gwen to forward to Lisa/Chris.

We might continue ordinance discussion during the meeting this evening or wait until the January 9, 2025 Workshop. The consensus was to wait until January 9. Sally adjourned the Workshop at 7:06 p.m.

7:00 p.m. Meeting

Sally Winterton called the Meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Windsor Baptist Church ~ Parsonage Demolition Request

Pastor O'Toole, Ric Bassler, and Tom Borders attended the Meeting.

The Church would like to demolish the parsonage, cinder block garage, and another small outbuilding on the corner of Park Road and Little Conestoga Road. They want to install the trail, improve the streetscape and view of the corner, and build an attractive stone wall that looks similar to the "Village of Eagle" stone wall at Park and Route 100. The parsonage has not been used for the Pastor in over 30 years, had basic repairs completed, has been used for storage for quite some time, but in preparation for the demolition, had been cleared out. There are no plans to use it. The original parsonage is the Joneses' house across Little Conestoga Road from the Church building.

The Historical Commission, at their December 3 meeting, requested the Church provide cost estimates to repair / renovate the building, and not demolish it.

When asked if there were any items of historic significance in the house, the Pastor noted that the Historical and Planning Commission members could walk through the house and take whatever items they'd like for the archives.

He said not needing the parsonage and installing the trail were the reasons for submitting the demolition permit application. They want to connect with the community (trail) and many activities go on behind the structure but the view is blocked. There's a small garden back there. They would slowly grade back to the usable open space. They are not thinking of expanding the parking at this time. They want to extend the sidewalk / trail along Little Conestoga Road to their parking lot. They want the view of the Church to be enhanced. There are 250 students enrolled in the K-8 school.

Further discussion included the condition of the parsonage. There is a basement only under the front section; the stone foundation is only 27' from the curb; a much taller (6') retaining wall would

be needed if it is to stay in place and the foundation might not be stable; there are 2-3 bedrooms upstairs and 1 is walked through to get to the stairs; is it historically significant; it's in poor condition.

The Commission requested a rendering or site Plan of what they'll plan for the corner should demolition be approved. The Church could work with the Historical Commission to memorialize the structure, perhaps install a plaque.

According to the approved land development plan for the school building addition, the Church has until 2025 to install the trail.

The Pastor was requested to read the Historical Commission's (HC) recommendations, which he did. The HC asked the Church to provide estimates to renovate the building. Discussion included if it'd be for public use, and elevator would be needed which would take up a lot of usable space and be costly. To adaptively reuse the building for an office, it might require a sprinkler system and a 2nd floor egress.

Joe Stoyack moved, seconded by Chad Adams, to recommend approval of the demolition permit with the following 3 conditions: that prior to issuing the permit, the Church will provide to the Planning Commission the site plan / renderings of their Plan for the corner, the Historical and Planning Commissions can walk through the building for possible artifacts, and afterward, the Church will memorialize the history of the building with a plaque. The vote is tabled until the January 9 meeting.

The Church will provide the rendering prior to the Historical Commission's January 7 meeting and the Planning Commission's January 9 meeting.

Sally Winterton advised there has been dangerous cross traffic from Ticonderoga Boulevard into the Church's Park Road access, cars and school buses. She reminded those present that the Church is to adjust their Park Road access to be directly across from Ticonderoga Boulevard when any new land development activity occurs.

Meeting Updates:

Environmental Advisory Council (EAC). No report.

Historical Commission (HC). Sally Winterton applauded the HC regarding their excellent lecture series, the latest of which was author Catherine Quillman's presentation of the history of Milford Mills and the Village of Eagle. Jim Dewees showed a very old greeting card mailed to his grandparents in "Uwchland, PA" -- no street address, house number, or zip code.

Sally Winterton advised there have been a couple meetings with the Board of Supervisors regarding the Village Concept Plan and Comprehensive Plan and the Board's concerns with the Historic Resource Protection Plan. The Board doesn't favor an historic overlay but instead add preservation language in each zoning district.

Joe Stoyack will review the C1-C3 zoning district ordinance edits and thinks the Village Design Guidelines and Village Concept Plan items should be incorporated into this amendment.

Approval of Minutes

Chad Adams moved, seconded by David Colajezzi, to approve the minutes of the October 10, 2024 Planning Commission meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Sally Winterton announced the next meeting is scheduled for January 9, 2025.

Open Session

Sally Winterton, Chad Adams and Jeff Smith's terms expire December 31, 2024. All have requested reappointment.

Sally noted that attendance at meetings needs to be more than 50%. Members need to be conscious of that. This Commission's recommendations have long-term effects on the community. She thanked those present for their attendance.

Gerry Stein commented that Downingtown School District is selling Lionville Station Farm to a developer, Rockwell, who will need zoning relief, and is promising \$15M natatorium.

Gwen Jonik advised a Zoning Hearing is scheduled for December 30 for a business to convert a 2nd floor office into 1 apartment; the Township is purchasing parcels for open space at 640 Little Conestoga Road and 511 Byers Road.

Adjournment

Joe Stoyack moved, seconded by Jim Dewees, to adjourn at 8:42 p.m. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen A. Jonik
Planning Commission Secretary