

East Rockhill Township
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

September 8, 2022

The Regular Meeting of the East Rockhill Township Planning Commission was held at 7:00pm on September 8, 2022 at the Municipal meeting room at 1622 N. Ridge Road, Perkasie, PA 18944.

Present: Anne Fenley, Chairperson
Joe Chellew, Vice-Chairperson
David Nyman, Secretary
Richard Kelly, Member
Aaron Teel, Member
Colin Monahan, Member
Steve Baluh P.E., Township Engineer
Marianne Morano, Township Manager

The meeting was called to order at 7:01pm by Mrs. Fenley.

Approval of August 11, 2022 Minutes: On motion by Mr. Chellew, seconded by Mr. Monahan, to approve the meeting minutes from the August 11, 2022 Planning Commission regular meeting as presented. With no additional discussion, all present voted in favor.

Old Business:

809 AND 901 THREE MILE RUN ROAD CONDITIONAL USE APPLICATION: Applicant proposes to develop the subject parcels with 46 three-bedroom townhouse units, Use B3.j. A Performance Standard Development is permitted within the Suburban (S) zoning district as a Conditional Use. The subject site is a combination of four tax parcels containing 15.914 acres, located between Three Mile Run Road and Penridge Airport. As discussed at the August 11, 2022, Planning Commission meeting, the applicant was requested to revise the site plan to include a tot lot area, increase off-street overflow parking, and reduce density.

Mr. Ben Goldthorp and Mr. Robert Cunningham PE were present.

Three alternative plans were submitted.

- A. CP-2 – Plan is generally similar to unit layout of the original plan. 46, 24-foot wide, townhouse units are configured in ten blocks ranging in size from four to six units each. Two 11 space (total 22 spaces) off-street parking areas are proposed on either side of units 38-43. A 2,600 SF Tot Lot area has been indicated to the rear of units 18 and 19, which is accessed by a path between the townhouse units. Street layout remains unchanged.
- B. CP-3 – Plan is also similar to the original unit layout and number. However, it varies by proposing 20-foot wide townhouse units, which have been noted by the applicant to be 3-Story slab on grade style units, as opposed to 2-Story units with basements as discussed at the prior meeting (basements are required pursuant to the General Requirements of Section 27-304.B3.p of the Zoning Ordinance). Additionally, perpendicular on-street parking (totaling 31 spaces) is proposed in-lieu-of off-street parking lots. 2,600 SF Tot Lot area is located generally where the original off-street parking lot was proposed between units 37 and 38. Street layout remains unchanged.
- C. CP-4 – Plan is generally similar to dwelling unit layout, number, and style included on CP-3, with the exception of townhouse block spacing being slightly modified, and less perpendicular on-street parking (26 total spaces) is proposed.

The following comments are made with respect to alternate Concept Plans and should be considered in addition to the original comments contained within our engineering review correspondence dated August 8, 2022, which remain applicable and are incorporated into the August 11, 2022 minutes.

Mr. Baluh reviewed his Township Engineer September 7, 2022 review letter included herein. Mr. Goldthorp provided responses and clarifications.

1. The applicant has not addressed the Planning Commissions request to reduce density.
2. Notwithstanding the Zoning Ordinance requirement for townhouse units being constructed with basements, the applicant should provide the Planning Commission with photos and/or sample architectural elevation drawings of the different proposed townhouse styles to better visualize how the different style units proposed may impact the overall look of the community. Elimination of basements, if desired, may require application to the Zoning Hearing Board for variance relief. (ZO Section 27-304.B3.p) **Concept CP2 met the zoning requirement to have 2 stories with a basement and is proposed to be 24 feet wide. Concept CP3 and CP4 do not meet the zoning requirement for a basement are 3 stories high with a garage on the ground floor and are proposed to be 20 feet wide which results in less impervious coverage and expands distance to adjoining properties.**
3. Plans have been provided to the Township Traffic Consultant, TPD, for review. Traffic Consultant review comments should be considered by the Planning Commissions as part of any recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.
4. A full traffic impact study (TIS) is required to be submitted in accordance with Section 22-406 of the Subdivision Ordinance. Results/recommendations of the TIS may impact the design of street improvements, traffic calming measures, and intersection locations. Any recommendations on these issues should be subject to modification and/or enhancement based on submission of final TIS, and review by Traffic Consultant. **Full traffic impact study is required as part of the review process and therefore traffic comments are preliminary and subject to change once study has been reviewed.**
5. On-street perpendicular parking as proposed with CP-3 and 4, is not recommended due to proposed location on the inside of curves which will adversely impact sight distance and safety of vehicle movements along the street.
6. Proposed Tot Lot does not fully address recreation land/improvement requirements in accordance with Section 22-525 of the Subdivision Ordinance. As previously discussed, Township should consider if alternate recreation facilities or a fee-in-lieu contribution is desired to address the remaining required land/improvements.
7. Alternate plans submitted do not include the location of adjoining dwellings to assist in review of screening in required buffer yards. Based on site investigation, most of the buffer yards are located in existing wooded areas. However, it was noted that there was limited understory and therefore, the mature trees will provide limited visual screening to adjoining properties. Existing vegetation should be required to be enhanced by incorporation of berms, and/or, installation of additional landscape plantings in, or adjacent to, buffer yards to improve visual screening. (ZO Section 27-1905) **Mature trees would remain and be supplemented with additional plantings. Mr. Goldthorp noted plantings were yet to be determined but was not in favor of berms unless necessary due to mature trees would not survive having dirt around the base of the tree.**
8. Site capacity calculations included on each alternate layout plan appear to be based on preliminary information. Site calculations, including but not limited to, total number of units permitted, total open space, and natural feature protection requirements are subject to change based on final survey, resource mapping, and site layout included on a complete preliminary plan submission. **Applicant confirmed the density was based on preliminary plan and is subject to change pending a survey and**

there is potential to merge all concepts. There is no known difference in price point, value and preference to the 2-story or 3-story townhouses proposed.

Township Traffic Engineer, Traffic Planning and Design, reviewed concept plans CP2, CP3 and CP4. Their September 8, 2022 letter incorporated herein was reviewed.

Roadway Comments

1. Three Mile Run Road should be improved to meet Township ordinances. This includes, widening, curb, sidewalk and drainage improvements. Due to this work and potential cuts into the pavement, a full width mill and overlay should be done within the limits of work area.
2. Recent speed data collected by the Pennridge Regional Police Department shows speeds exceed the 35 mph speed limit and meets criteria for traffic calming to be installed on Three Mile Run Road. Possible traffic calming measures to be implemented include but are not limited to: **Traffic calming can be all options or a combination.**
 - a. Lane narrowing and/or additional roadway narrowing visuals
 - b. Your Speed Signs. **Sign will display speed located on Three Mile Run Road and be Township owned.**
 - c. Roundabout
 - d. Rumble strips, centerline and edge of road
 - e. Series of Chicanes using center median horizontal deflection. **Chicanes was clarified as a concrete curve or island in a road.**

Final traffic calming improvements will need to be coordinated with final roadway widening Improvements.

3. Submit a traffic impact study per Township Ordinances and as directed by Township staff and professionals. **Applicant stated the study was delayed until school was in session for accurate counts but was anticipated to be completed for the Conditional Use Hearing.**
4. Driveway locations at the proposed site should be placed to ensure the maximum sight distance possible along the site frontage. The greater of the speed limit and 85th percentile speed should be used to calculate the necessary sight distance. **Applicant stated the sight distance to the railroad overpass has been reviewed and meets requirements. Applicant will comply.**
5. Review the final configuration of the proposed site intersections with Three Mile Run Road within the traffic study. Turn restrictions may be necessary based on the findings in the study.
6. Given the location of the development to a local trail, a pedestrian crossing should be provided within the site frontage. The location should be chosen to maximize sight distance and to meet current industry standards. The following should be implemented: **All options are recommended.**
 - a. Stamped asphalt textured crossing.
 - b. Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons. These should be placed on the side of the roadway and overhead, with each location having back to back signs/flashing beacons so they are visible from both approaches (Three beacons and signs per approach, six total).
 - c. Overhead mast arm should include a luminaire to light the crossing at night.
 - d. A PennDOT flashing warning device permit will be necessary for installation.
 - e. A solar option with battery backup should be reviewed. If solar is not possible at the time of

construction, a hardwire connection with battery backup should be provided.

- f. Install advance pedestrian warning signs.
7. SR 313 and Three Mile Run Road should be reviewed in coordination with PennDOT to determine the need and type of additional safety improvement devices.
8. Due to the projected increase in traffic, review the rail line overpass to determine if additional guiderail needs to be installed or end treatments need to be upgraded.

Plan Comments

9. Provide sidewalk between driveways to allow access to the proposed pedestrian crossing. This will ensure residents do not have to walk the entire development to get to the crossing. **Applicant will comply.**
10. Widen drive aisle to provide on street parking if necessary. Note, the internal roadway and parking configuration needs to be confirmed with truck turning templates showing the largest vehicle to enter the site. At the least parking needs to be restricted on the inside of the roadway ring to avoid obstructing sight lines. **Applicant has confirmed the 150 foot radius is designed to code.**
11. Provide an internal marked pedestrian crossing with appropriate pavement markings, stamped asphalt textured crossing and warning signs for residents wanting to get to the Tot lot. **Applicant will comply.**
12. Show the location of the mailbox area for the development. It is recommended to have this in the area of the crossing. **Gang mailboxes are required by the Post Office. Applicant will comply.**
13. CP2- Restrict parking on inside of roadway to ensure sight lines exiting the parking lot are not obstructed.
14. CP3 & CP4-Perpendicular parking as shown will cause sight distance issues and these options should not be advanced.

Planning Commission asked questions of the applicant. Applicant advised some review items were premature and specifics could not be determined during the Conditional Use which is only for the use but did reaffirm traffic study is pending. The traffic study takes into account all known projected developments. It was noted the Township engaged Special Council Scott MacNair to represent the interests of the Township as a whole and the Township Solicitor will represent the Board of Supervisors.

Applicant believed SR313 & Three Mile Run Road was off site and would not be impacted by this Development, however if the traffic study identifies the intersection as a problem due to increased traffic, improvements may be required.

- Steve Giddon(?), 945 Three Mile Run Road, (name could not be located on sign in sheet or as a property owner in Bucks County records), asked how many houses exist on the property now and is opposed to narrowing road. Historically there were 3 houses, 1 of which was recently demolished.
- Bob Brooks, 305 Three Mile Run Road, stated concerns for speeding and increased traffic with the existing narrow road.
- Mr. Goldthorp reiterated what a Conditional Use Hearing is and a Comprehensive Plan which was also reviewed at the last meeting. A Conditional Use is one of the review components to the subdivision process for the use only and the proposal meets zoning requirements. A comprehensive plan is completed by municipalities every 10 years and must provide growth to meet state mandates.
- Ron Schulberger, 2386 Hill Road, stated concerns for traffic and road conditions.
- Scott Esterly, 199 Three Mile Run Road, stated opposition to development and the drain on resources and would like to see single homes.
- Amanda Crouthamel, 913 Three Mile Run Road, recently purchased her property adjacent to the

proposed development and stated opposition going from 3 single family homes to 46 townhomes which does not match the neighborhood and asked if there would be a homeowners association (HOA) and how many would be rentals and if that could be restricted. Applicant stated there could be an HOA if the Township was in agreement and the HOA would maintain stormwater, lawn maintenance, roads, tot lot and all amenities and did not believe rental opportunity could be legally restricted. Ms. Crouthamel is opposed to the impact the development will have on her privacy.

- Anthony DiFondi, 308 Harriet Drive, is opposed to townhouses in a community with single family dwellings.
- Marc Mancinelli, 2030 West Rock Road, stated opposition to any more development.
- Barb Gebelein, 62 Ridge Run Road, stated concerns about traffic.
- Emily Geib, 900 Rock Hill Road, stated concerns for well water and impact the development would have. The development would be on public water and Perkasio Regional Authority has confirmed they have capacity any questions related to public water must be directed to them. Ms. Geib demanded addresses for Planning Commission members and stated they were elected positions and were not protecting residents. Mrs. Morano stated the members are by appointment and volunteer their time.
- Jessica McCauley, 711 Three Mile Run Road, is adjacent to the proposed development and stated concern for impact on school system, traffic and the desire to move her driveway for improved site visibility.
- Tim Erk, 128 Three Mile Run Road, asked how development can be stopped.
- Mr. Kelly and Mr. Monahan stated the Comprehensive Plan was recently updated and as part of the review Township is required to demonstrate growth is being provided for. Zoning districts have requirements on what is permissible, and the application meets the requirements.
- Mr. Chellew recommended reading the first page of the Comprehensive Plan which explains why the Township cannot just say no to development.

On motion by Mr. Chellew, seconded by Mr. Monahan, to recommend granting the Conditional Use application contingent on (1) compliance with Township Traffic Engineer recommendations and supplemental reviews based on traffic study results; (2) compliance with Township Engineer review letters; (3) fencing installed to prohibit access to the adjacent Pennridge Airport; (4) enhanced buffer to adjacent properties; (5) maximize off street parking to the greatest extent possible; (6) reduce the unit density so as to be more in harmony with and appropriate in appearance to the existing character of the general vicinity. With no additional discussion, all present voted in favor. Mr. Nyman, elected Supervisor, abstained from the vote.

New Business:

There was none

Public Comment:

There was none.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:27pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marianne Morano
Township Manager