

**EAST PIKELAND PLANNING COMMISSION
OCTOBER 12, 2020 MEETING**

CALL TO ORDER

The public meeting was held electronically through the Zoom application via internet and telephone access. Chairman John Colarusso, Vice Chair John Schott, members Helena Van Vliet, Ron Hoinowski, Leo Kaercher, Ezra Brett and Kersten Appler participated electronically. The township engineer, the zoning officer, and the township manager also participated online. The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 14, 2020 MINUTES

MOTION MADE BY JOHN SCHOTT TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 14, 2020 MEETING MINUTES; MOTION SECONDED BY RON HOINOWSKI. ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Pikeland Commons Concept Plan for 708 Pothouse Road

Kathryn Evans of Church Housing Corp. introduced their concept plan for a work-force housing development on the Pothouse Road site. Targeted residents are families currently in the PASD that can no longer afford the escalating rents to continue living in the area/district. The market rate for rentals in Phoenixville average \$1200-\$1400. Through PHFA funding and a tax credit program, the rents in this development are reduced and more affordable for working families making less than the average median income. It is not subsidized housing.

Project engineer, Kestra Kelly gave an overview of the 4.7 acre parcel on Pothouse Road, which is split-zoned commercial and R-4 residential. CHC will be acquiring 1203 Township Line Road (R-4) for a combined acreage of 5.14. The main access would be on Township Line Road, with Pothouse Road being secondary, possibly for emergency only or limited to right-in/right-out. Three apartment buildings totaling 48 units are proposed, along with a clubhouse, community plaza and 2 playgrounds.

Helena Van Vliet was interested in more site detail and suggested a more unique layout. Kersten Appler commented on the stormwater basin locations and buffering; she also asked if this is permanent housing or transitional. Kestra Kelly explained that the plan is conceptual and that additional site details will be provided as it takes shape. Kathryn Evans responded that it would be permanent housing.

John Schott reminded everyone that the commercial district does not allow apartments, and that the proposed density exceeds the R-4 residential maximum. Attorney Andrew Rau called this project a hybrid for which he suggests a zoning amendment or overlay district for work-force housing communities could be the solution.

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OCTOBER 12, 2020 MEETING**

Further discussion included the proximity of public transportation, sidewalks and pedestrian access, reduced parking (72 spaces provided), and the benefits of acquiring additional land. Kathryn Evans said the Pikeland Square shopping center does not want to provide a pedestrian connection, and that the owner of the land-locked parcel behind Mavis Tire wants \$3-million. Ms. Evans and her team will consider their options and return at a later date.

Public Comment:

Resident, Tom Schmitt commented on the density and the increased traffic.

Sewer Needs Analysis – Valley Forge Sewer Authority

The township manager, Kim Moretti, provided on screen the sewer service area map along with a chart for the public sewer capacity needs through the year 2035 (in 5 year increments). The chart reflects approved subdivisions not yet built, potential subdivisions and land developments based on current zoning, and redevelopment along the Route 724 corridor. Mrs. Moretti explained the process of acquiring an additional 1,200 EDU's from Valley Forge Sewer Authority, and that a plant expansion is being considered. DEP approval is required for VFSA to add an aeration tank, which will sufficiently meet the future needs of East Pikeland and the other founding-member municipalities. No action by the planning commission is required at this time. There were no questions from the members, nor did anyone from the public raise their hand to speak.

CORRESPONDENCE, REPORTS AND OTHER DISCUSSION TOPICS

Ready for 100

Rusty Strauss gave an update on the Ready for 100 renewable energy initiative. A multi-municipal VPP grant application for East Pikeland, West Vincent and Schuylkill Township was submitted to the county. If awarded, it will provide resources to implement a clean energy plan, ordinance review for sustainability principles, and for public education.

Sidewalk Project

Ron Hoinowski reported that the PennDOT highway occupancy permit has been issued, TPD is preparing the bid specs for construction. Kim Moretti announced that the township will be applying for another multi-modal grant offered by PennDOT.

Phoenixville Regional Planning Committee

Ron Hoinowski gave an update on regional projects: Phoenixville Borough is proposing a civic center on the north side; West Pikeland acquired 68 acres of open space; Schuylkill Township passed a tree ordinance.

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OCTOBER 12, 2020 MEETING**

LOW IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Parking Standards and Sustainability

Township engineer, Ed Latshaw, provided the planning commission with an overview of the parking provisions outlined in §1707 the zoning ordinance: The required *minimum* number of parking spaces is determined by the use and the gross floor area; shared parking and reserve parking areas are allowed; pervious parking is *encouraged* but not required. Vehicle and pedestrian circulation, maintenance, buffering, screening, and lighting are also included in the referenced subsection.

The Redner's site (Shoppes at Valley Forge) was referenced as an example of an egregious parking lot. The commission is going to reevaluate parking space requirements to determine what reasonable and necessary. They also want to add sustainability requirements as opposed to encouraging them. Lighting will also be addressed.

John Colarusso suggest the members visit both the Shoppes at Valley Forge and Westside for a visual comparison. They should write down their thoughts, concerns and suggestions for John Schott to compile for the November meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kathy Frisco asked about the Adelpia pipeline project and if it runs through East Pikeland. Kim Moretti replied that the pipeline runs through 70 properties in the township and there are 3 valve stations. The project schedule is unknown at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION MADE BY JOHN SCHOTT TO ADJOURN THE MEETING; MOTION SECONDED BY HELENA VAN VLIET. ALL IN FAVOR, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 8:35 PM.