

EAST PIKELAND PLANNING COMMISSION
JUNE 12, 2017 MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman John Colarusso called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Other members in attendance were John Schott, Rusty Strauss, Helena Van Vliet, Ed Cooley, Ron Hoinowski and Leo Kearcher. The township engineer, planner and zoning officer were also present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION MADE BY JOHN SCHOTT TO APPROVE THE MAY 8, 2017 MINUTES.
MOTION SECONDED BY ED COOLEY. ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Proposed Zoning Amendment for Ecovillage Overlay in the Kimberton District

Kisha Tyler explained the process for submission and review of proposed ordinance amendments by property owners.

Attorney Robert Romain, along with planners Robert Smiley and Adam Suplee were the primary representatives for the applicant. Bob Smiley summarized the proposal, which is an ecovillage overlay for the [new] KR and KV zoning districts that would be to be permitted by conditional use (Board of Supervisors). Key elements of the overlay are sustainability guidelines, reduced impervious surfaces, open space.

The audience was advised that the focus of the review and discussion is the ordinance, not the Altair development plan.

Helena Van Vliet doesn't think that the term ecovillage is adequately defined and suggested it not be used. She asked if there is a minimum number of dwelling units to be classified as an ecovillage. Helena also suggested that the capture and reuse of stormwater should be a lot more than 10%, perhaps 50%.

John Schott opposed any relief from fire safety provisions. Ed Latshaw spoke of his discussion with the fire marshal, which determined that some of the requirements of §1706 of the zoning ordinance are excessive with regard to fire truck access and should be revisited. He asserted that adequate access is being provided for fire trucks, and will provide a summary. Rusty suggested §1706 be reviewed and updated. John Schott also asked that the setbacks from single family residential dwellings be changed to all residential dwellings, which they agreed to do.

Ron Hoinowski asked if accessory structures are limited in number. The proposed ordinance does not limit the number and the current zoning ordinance does not limit the number.

Rusty Strauss asked for clarification of §2801.1 as it pertained to the use of parcels that are situated within outlying zoning district (i.e. R2). Adam Suplee explained that it would apply to

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tracts that may be split zoned, and the area outside of KV or KR must be designated as open space.

It was agreed that this provision of 2801.1 should be reworded for a clearer understanding. The overnight guest period for the common house needs to be clearer as well. Some repetitive wording was pointed out that could be removed. There were a few minor items and references that also needed to be cleaned up.

The Altair group will address the comments and provide a by-right plan comparison. Density and impacts will be discussed at the July meeting. No action was taken.

The floor was opened to public comment.

Robert Davis expressed opposition to the zoning proposal and his displeasure with the planning commission. He asked if the proposed sketch that accompanied the ordinance complies with the current zoning. Mr. Colarusso said no.

Barry Fry questioned enforcement methods for a Conditional Use approval and the HOA requirements. Ed Latshaw replied that annual reporting components are built into the ordinance; the HOA would enforce their provisions; and any zoning or code issues would be enforced by the township.

Tom Schmitt asked if wetlands could be counted as part of the open space. Mr. Latshaw said yes, and that it is consistent with the current ordinance.

Will Connelly asked if the applicant could provide a list of provisions they want changed for a side-by-side comparison of the by-right plan.

Kevin Cook asked who reviews the annual reports and how long it would take. The answer is the township staff, solicitor and consultants; there is no way to anticipate how long it will take.

Bob Marine asked if the ordinance is on the township website. Kisha Tyler said no, it will be posted in the morning.

Linda Schmitt said that Altair's suggestion of more open space is misleading because it is unusable land. She referred to the project as high density living, not an ecovillage, and was concerned about the dwelling units becoming rentals. Ms. Schmitt also made reference to a book called "Ecovillages", the Camp Hill Village located in West Vincent, and 2 ecovillage developments she and her husband visited in Virginia and North Carolina. The chairman said her comments are plan specific and not ordinance related. Rusty Strauss did commend her research efforts.

Mr. Fry asked if the grant received was for review of the Altair plan. The answer is no. Mrs. Fry asked if Altair is involved with development of the David property or other property in Kimberton. No one was aware of any such involvement.

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Chris Frisco asked if the site plan would also be discussed next month. John Colarusso said no.

CORRESPONDENCE

Emails received by the zoning officer in opposition of the proposed ecovillage ordinance and the Altair plan for development were acknowledged.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment was incorporated and addressed during review of the EvoVillage proposal. The public was reminded of the Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission's community planning workshop on June 22.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION MADE BY JOHN SCHOTT TO ADJOURN THE MEETING; SECONDED BY JOHN COLARUSSO. ALL IN FAVOR, MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:05 PM.