

**EAST PIKELAND PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**JULY 10, 2017 MINUTES**

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**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 and zoning officer were also present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MOTION MADE BY JOHN SCHOTT TO APPROVE THE JUNE 12, 2017 MINUTES.  
MOTION SECONDED BY ED COOLEY. ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED.

**NEW BUSINESS**

***Westrum Luxor apartment concept presentation for 283 Schuylkill Road***

Developer, John Westrum gave a power point presentation of an apartment concept called Luxor, a self-contained, highly amenitized, socially integrated environment appealing to the millennial housing market. The all-inclusive hub promotes social interaction of its residents with indoor and outdoor gathering areas, weekly events, entertainment, infinity pool and more. Mr. Westrum proclaimed that the complex of 173 one and two bedroom units provides a lifestyle that meets the needs of the growing demographics and the location is ideal with its close proximity to downtown Phoenixville. He also insisted that there is little to no impact on local schools. The 4-story building would have both a parking area and under building parking, making the height approximately 55' from grade. The smallest unit would be 650 sf and there are no balconies.

John Colarusso mentioned that apartment use is permitted in the MU district, not in the C district. He asked why it should be allowed in another district before we've had the opportunity to assess the potentials within the MU district. He further mentioned that in 2007, the property owner opposed the zoning change of this property from C to MU, and that the Board of Supervisors honored that request.

Helena said the 4-story with underground parking is very large and should be scaled down. John Schott agreed.

Ed Cooley questioned the lot size and whether it would be integrated with the existing shopping center, using the same access from Route 23. Mr. Westrum replied that the parcel is 4 acres; the building would be a condominium-type ownership and would use the same entrance as the shopping center. The total of both parcels is 10 acres. Ed also had concerns about the height and sight line, as did Leo Kearcher.

John Schott suggested the developer provide a complete list of items that would require relief from the Zoning Hearing Board. The developer agreed. Attorney Chris Shubert suggested a zoning overlay be considered as opposed to variances from the Zoning Hearing Board.

Neighboring property owner, Donna Ott, strongly opposed the apartments. The close proximity to the property line, security and privacy (4 stories overlooking their business and residence), and Ott's Lane being used as a cut-thru for traffic were her main concerns. She insisted they pursue a

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site on Route 724 where the use is allowed. If they intend to pursue this property, she would like the developer to reach out to the Ott family.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Proposed Ecovillage Overlay Ordinance**

The audience was reminded that this matter is a proposed zoning amendment for an ecovillage overlay in the Kimberston zoning districts (KR, KT, KV), not the Altair project.

In addition to Ed Latshaw's July 7, 2017 review letter, the discussion included unit sizes; parking details; roof runoff, rain barrels and recapturing gray water; defining solar reflection; increasing outdoor seating; open space, walkability and public access to trails; the boulevard access; and determining factors for fiscal, school and traffic impacts. Density became the latter focus.

John Colarusso acknowledged that the document provides a good framework for a sustainability ordinance, but they still need to quantify the impacts relative to allowing the increased density. If consideration is given it should be determined by the lessened impacts versus a by-right plan, but definitely not by the hypothetical formula mentioned in Ed Latshaw's letter. The other members agreed. The applicant will address the concerns and the discussion will continue at the August 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 said he is disappointed that there has been no discussion of the neighbor's concerns and opposition of high density.

Kevin Cook said he also opposed any increase in density, and that the term ecovillage is just a marketing tool.

Tom and Lynn Schmidt refuted the Altair plan as an ecovillage, instead calling it a cohousing development. They also mentioned that an ecovillage they visited had many children, so there could very well be an impact on schools. Both opposed the increased density.

Kathy Detweiler referred to a letter circulated regarding increased density and was opposed. She asked "what is an ecovillage?" Kisha Tyler read the definition as provided in the proposed ordinance.

Angela Moore opposed the 500 square foot units suggesting it may become a rental community. She was advised that the township does **not** prohibit rental of homes.

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Kathy Frisco said she is very upset with this whole process of allowing a developer to come before the township for a zoning change. John Colarusso explained that as an owner of property, they have a right to submit the request.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Letters from Robert Davis were provided to the planning commission. There was no discussion.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public comments were addressed with each agenda item.

Clarification was made that the proposed Kimberton zoning amendment scheduled before the Board of Supervisors on July 11, 2017 is not related to the ecovillage overlay or Altair project.

**ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION MADE BY JOHN COLARUSSO TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. MOTION SECONDED BY JOHN SCHOTT. ALL IN FAVOR, MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:35 PM.