

**WRIGHTSTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
SYNOPSIS OF MEETING OF MAY 27, 2010**

The Wrightstown Township Planning Commission met on May 27, 2010 at the Wrightstown Township Building, 2203 Second Street Pike, Wrightstown. In attendance and voting were: Frank Davis, Chairman, Joseph Conroy, Ann Mark, and Lary Whalen, members Also in attendance were Kevin Kochanski, Township Planner and Mario Canales, Township Engineer.

Trivellini Minor Subdivision – Preliminary Approval: William R. McNaney, Engineer and Jeanne Trivellini were in attendance seeking preliminary plan approval for a minor subdivision which divides a 19.83 acre parcel on Pine Lane into three lots, each for a B-1 single family dwelling use. Lots #1 and 2 will have a shared driveway. The applicant is also proposing a lot line change to accommodate a flag lot access strip for proposed lot #3. Access to all three lots will be gained from Pine Lane. On lot water and sewer are proposed for each lot. Approximately 10.74 acres of the site are protected by a conservation easement.

Mr. McNaney said that the Zoning Hearing Board has granted a special exception from JMZO Section 903.B.1 to construct a portion of driveway, a swale and a stormwater pipe in the floodplain district on lots #1 and 2 and a variance from JMZO Section 903.B.2 to construct a driveway across the wetlands for lot #3. During the Zoning Hearing some neighbors in attendance discussed their concerns with the proposed buffering along the western property lines of lots #1 and 2. These neighbors' properties face Durham Road. They are asking that instead of planting the required buffering along the entire property line, the buffering be planted to provide privacy between the houses but leaving some openings so as not to disrupt the views of the open field on the conservation easement. They also asked that the new houses be located within the building envelope to provide some distance from their homes.

Mr. Canales said that these neighbors had also expressed some concern about drainage, but he is certain that stormwater will flow away from their properties.

Resident David Crowley of 1072 Durham Road, speaking on behalf of himself and his neighbors Keith Jordan and Daneyelle Schrage of 1076 Durham Road, said that both neighbors would like buffer planting to only extend about 70 feet to block the view of the new houses only.

Mr. Kochanski said that the buffering can be added to the plans at the time that permits are issued and the exact locations of the buildings have been determined. The buffer would be a mix of trees and shrubs, not berms. A note can be added to the plan explaining that the plantings are yet to be determined.

Dr. Mark reminded the residents in attendance that the new owners of the properties would be allowed to add to the plantings or erect fences for their privacy.

The Commission reviewed the waivers sought, most of which had already been discussed at previous meetings. The members were still in agreement to recommend granting of these waivers:

- o Section 503.1, which requires certain improvements to the existing street.
- o Section 518.3, which requires side lot lines to be at right angles

- Section 518.6, which addresses the ratio of lot depth to width.
- Section 531.3.B(1)(a), which requires a dedication of open space or fee in lieu.

Mr. Davis asked whether the applicant will comply with all other points in the review letters.

Mr. McNaney said that the applicant has already agreed to comply.

Resident Judy Sauer said that she has some concerns about lighting.

Dr. Mark noted that the new houses will not be taking access from the street, so the owners would probably not want to light the fronts of the houses. Some security and safety lighting would be needed. She said that the Commission could recommend that “dark sky” lighting be used.

Mr. Canales said that home owners would be required to comply with existing lighting ordinances, which do not permit light to shine in neighbors’ windows.

Dr. Conroy moved to recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve this plan for a minor subdivision subject to the following conditions:

1. *The plan comply with the review letter of Boucher and James dated April 1, 2010;*
2. *The plan comply with the review letter of Pickering Corts and Summerson dated March 27, 2010;*
3. *Buffering along the west (Durham Road) side of lots #1 and 2 be adjusted at the time of building permit to block view of buildings but not entire length of properties;*
4. *Buffering be added on lot #3 and that trees be cleared at driveway entrance to provide adequate sight distance;*
5. *Building locations on lots #1 and 2 be adjusted to provide privacy for existing homes on adjoining lots;*
6. *Dark sky lighting is recommended.*

The following waivers are recommended:

- *SALDO Section 503.1, which requires certain improvements to the existing street*
- *SALDO Section 518.3, which requires side lot lines to be at right angles.*
- *SALDO Section 518.6, which addresses the ratio of lot depth to width.*
- *SALDO Section 531.3.B(1)(a), which requires a dedication of open space or fee in lieu.*
- *SALDO Section 525.F.C., which requires that tree protection areas be shown on plan.*
- *SALDO Section 525.C., which requires a 30 foot wide buffer for all new subdivisions. This is a partial waiver for lot #3 only.*
- *SALDO Sections 525.F and 525.G, a partial waiver from the requirement to document trees above 24 inches.*

And subject to the approval of the Township Engineer, waivers from

- *SALDO Section 515.5.H, which requires a minimum 10 foot wide basin berm*
- *SALDO Section 515.5.L.(10), which requires 1 foot of freeboard in the emergency spillway.*

Dr. Mark seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

Draft Energy Ordinance Review: Mr. Davis explained to the Planning Commission that the Joint Zoning Council has been discussing regulating of alternative energy sources. Bucks County Planning Commission Executive Director Lynn Bush drafted a memo

outlining some concerns that should be addressed and outlining possible ordinance provisions the Jointure might consider. Most of these provisions are from ordinances already in place elsewhere.

Dr. Mark pointed out that “geothermal” is referenced as renewable on page 3 and non-renewable on page 3 of the memo. This needs to be further clarified.

Mr. Kochanski said that geothermal energy is less intrusive than other alternative energy sources. It is usually not considered a zoning issue; it is regulated by natural resource protections.

Dr. Conroy noted that he uses a geothermal system at his shore house and is very satisfied with it.

The members discussed use of wind energy. Mr. Davis said that he has visited a vendor of small wind turbines and learned that in Bucks County, which does not have adequate elevations to make wind farms a practical consideration, using windmills can be very cost prohibitive as they do not generate sufficient energy. He would like the municipalities to provide some economic information to residents considering wind energy.

Mr. Canales reminded the members that it is the Planning Commission’s responsibility to address matters of location, noise, setbacks, etc.

Dr. Mark asked whether allowable noise levels should be part of the ordinance.

Mr. Kochanski said that wind turbines would have to comply with existing noise ordinances.

The members discussed the height requirements for windmills and were in agreement that the suggested setback requirements seem adequate.

The members discussed the concerns with wood fired boilers. Mr. Davis said that he believed some of these are already in use in Wrightstown.

Mr. Kochanski said that the EPA is drafting regulations on these because there is some concern about air quality.

After further consideration the Commission recommended that the following be addressed in any future ordinances:

- Some reference to noise for wind turbines
- Clarification of whether geothermal energy is renewable. It is referenced in the document as non-renewable on page 3 and renewable on page 2.
- Reference to costs/encouragement to use more economical methods for alternative energy sources.
- Reference to placement of outdoor wood fire boilers away from utility lines.
- Pages 6 and 7, which outline provisions for encouraging the use of renewable energy seems too restrictive and in parts inappropriate for our location.

Draft Historic Preservation Review: Mr. Kochanski explained that previously drafted ordinances for historic preservation had been aimed at preventing demolition by neglect, but the Jointure partners were concerned that the proposed ordinances would prove onerous to property owners who wish to maintain and/or improve their older homes and outbuildings. This new draft has focused on requirements for redevelopment by land developers of properties which contain historic structures.

The members were in agreement that the memo addressed all of their concerns. Dr. Mark said that she would like to see some consequences for builders who either deliberately or accidentally destroy a historic structure as part of land development.

The Commission members agreed that some consequence for demolition without Township approval and/or permission should be added to the ordinance.

Dr. Mark moved to adjourn at 9:45 PM. Mr. Davis seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted:

**Mary Donaldson
Recording Secretary**