

**WRIGHTSTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2005**

The Wrightstown Township Planning Commission met on Thursday, February 10, 2005 in the Community Room of the Village Library, Penns Park Road, Wrightstown, PA. In attendance and voting were: Frank Davis, Chairman; John Halderman, Vice Chairman; John Fowler, and Ann Mark members. Also in attendance were Mario Canales of Pickering Corts and Sommerson, Township Engineer and Judith Stern Goldstein of Boucher and James, Township Planner.

Call to Order: Mr. Davis called the meeting to order at 8:00PM.

Approval of the Minutes: *Mr. Fowler moved to accept the minutes of January 27, 2005. Dr. Mark seconded and the motion passed 3-0-1, with Mr. Halderman abstaining.*

Mendonca Conditional Use: Mr. Davis informed the Commission that the Mendonca Conditional Use had been continued at the request of the applicant in order to discuss a possible conservation easement.

Gorski Subdivision Preliminary Plan: Mr. Davis informed the Commission that this application had been removed from the agenda.

Sprint Conditional Use: Mr. Michael Gill and Mr. Neil Sklaroff, attorneys for Sprint PCS, were present to review the Conditional Use application for a 40-foot addition to an existing 120-foot monopole on Township-owned property. This extension would hold 9 antennae. Mr. Gill pointed out that the original approval for the pole had been for 120 feet, with the ability to go to 160 feet. The addition is needed to fill a gap in service.

Mr. Clem Poole, the engineer on the project, presented a series of maps that illustrated the current Sprint service and the projected service with the extension in place. Mr. Poole noted that a large gap between the service from the Newtown cell tower and the Buckingham cell tower would be filled by the extension. He said that this gap is two miles wide.

In response to questions from the Commission, Mr. Gill said that there would still be some gaps in service in Wrightstown. These would be filled by the eventual installation of towers in other municipalities. The original pole had been built to accommodate five different cell carriers. The current antennae would remain in place. The Ordinance allows for a maximum height of 200 feet; however there are no plans at this time to extend this tower beyond the requested 160 feet.

Mr. Emmanuel Gold of URS Corporation, in response to questions about the structural integrity of the existing pole, said that with the addition of the 9 antennae, the structure would still be at only 82% of capacity. The foundation for the original pole had been designed to accommodate the maximum permitted pole. Ice is blown off of the flexible pole.

Mr. Davis expressed concern about welding of the extension to the galvanized pole. He said that rust streaks would be very unsightly. Mr. Gold said that the pole would be painted, and rust would not be a problem.

At the request of the Commission, Mr. Gill agreed to provide photographs of a similar pole extension for the Board of Supervisors, as well as engineering details of the proposed attachment.

Mr. Canales noted that the structural analysis presented assumes that the tower is currently in undamaged condition and asked Mr. Gill to verify this before the Board of Supervisors meeting. He also asked that American Tower confirm that the nearby quarry blasting would have no effect on the tower.

Mr. Davis expressed concern about the appearance of the Township open space and asked if other locations had been considered for these additional antennae, such as the high-tension wires that run through the Township.

Mr. Poole explained that he had conducted signal strength tests using a crane and transmitting antennae, testing various locations and heights. The utility poles are too far south to fill the gap in service. This is the only suitable location to fill this gap. Testing indicated that 160 feet is the necessary height. Mr. Poole explained that the remaining gaps in service shown on his maps could only be filled by towers placed in the New Hope area. At this time no exact plan is in place for locating a tower in this area, although a search for a suitable location is ongoing.

Mr. Gill said that Sprint will comply with the Pickering Corts and Sommerson letter of January 13, 2005.

The Commission discussed the landscaping plan for this project. Mr. Gill said that Sprint will comply with the Boucher and James letter of January 7, 2005. He noted that the only addition on the ground would be an equipment cabinet. The fence would be extended. He agreed that all dead trees would be replaced, and at Ms. Goldstein's suggestion, volunteer vegetation would be allowed to grow. Mr. Gill said that at the time of the installation of the original pole, Sprint had agreed to pay a fee in lieu of landscaping at the site, and they would be amenable to a similar arrangement for the extension.

Mr. Fowler said that the Township-owned property adjacent to the cell tower is an organic farm, and he asked that no herbicides or pesticides be used on the landscaping. Mr. Fowler said that when the original pole had been installed, there had been a great deal of trenching to run electrical wires to it. He asked if the electrical wires already in place would be adequate to accommodate the pole extension.

Mr. Gill said that he believed the existing electricity would be adequate, but would confirm this with the Township Manager on Monday.

Mr. Gill said that there was minimal increase in impervious surface for this extension. The footprint would be 18 feet by 20 feet. He said that there is a manually operated light, similar to a porch light, on the site for use if a worker needs to visit in the evening. No other lighting is planned. He said that there would be no noise other than the low hum of the fan similar to a

computer fan. The pole would transmit at 1950 to 1965 megahertz, and Sprint would be the sole user of this frequency.

Mr. Dave DelBianco, a resident, expressed concern that Sprint was making a case for this extension to save money. He asked if this location was the only possible spot for a cell tower to fill in the gap, or if an additional cell tower could be erected that would fill the gap. He said that he was very concerned that this spot had been chosen for an unsightly extension because it would be less costly than a new tower elsewhere.

Mr. Poole again reviewed the field tests that had been conducted. He explained that these were not computer generated results, but that the tests had been conducted by driving a crane around and using a transmitter at various locations and at various heights to test the best possible location to fill in the maximum service area. The tests were conducted at heights of 110, 140 and 160 feet. These tests were conducted in November of 2000, when there were no leaves on the trees. He said that there would still be gaps in service near New Hope and to the south, but these would only be filled by additional towers in these other municipalities. In response to Mr. DelBianco's questioning, Mr. Poole said that even if additional towers were erected in New Hope and Newtown, they would not fill the gap in Wrightstown. Extending the Penns Park tower would not help fill this gap. He agreed to provide the Board of Supervisors with some additional maps that would illustrate possible coverage if additional towers were placed in New Hope.

In response to Mr. Fowler's question, Mr. Gill said that Sprint pays the Township a fee to use the location.

Mr. Halderman moved to recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve this conditional use with the conditions that:

- 1. The plan show engineering details of how the extension is to be connected to the existing pole;*
- 2. No additional lighting be installed;*
- 3. A detailed landscaping plan be provided, or a fee in lieu of landscaping be paid, and that no herbicides or pesticides be used;*
- 4. Details of coverage areas at the different cell tower heights tested be shown, to insure that the 160 foot extension is necessary;*
- 5. Compliance with the Pickering Courts and Sommerson letter of January 13, 2005, and the Boucher and James letter of January 7, 2005;*
- 6. Power requirements be researched to discover whether any additional trenching would be necessary;*
- 7. A good effort be made to diagram theoretical coverage with the addition of towers in neighboring townships in the future;*
- 8. Fencing is of natural materials.*

Mr. Fowler seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

Jenta Sketch Plan: Mr. Scott Mills, Landscape Architect, was present to review a sketch plan for a minor subdivision of property at Cherry Lane and Washington Avenue owned by Mr. Eric Asadoorian.

Mr. Mills explained that this 16.3-acre property in the CM (Conservation Management) Zoning District has a number of existing structures, which are to be removed, including some apartments and a house. The existing storefront is to remain and be renovated as a residential garage. The plan shows four residential dwellings. Preliminary review by DelVal Soils indicates that this is the best design to accommodate the septic systems. He noted that the property drains to the south and west.

In response to questions from the Commission, Mr. Asadoorian said that the planned homes are for his family members. He would like to renovate the storefront as a garage, because there is a sentimental attachment to the building.

Ms. Goldstein said that in the Boucher and James letter of January 24, 2005, she had pointed out a number of concerns if the existing storefront remains. She said that there are setback problems, and she advised that if a dwelling were to be attached to the storefront, there would be restrictions on the size. She pointed out that this is a non-conforming structure, and a special exception would be needed to put an addition on it. A zoning permit would also be needed to remove trees.

Mr. Mills noted that the sketch plan presented would leave 13.7 acres undisturbed.

Mr. Mills said that no significant soil testing had yet been conducted, but preliminary field investigation for septic areas showed limited possibilities for location of septic systems. For this reason the lot shapes are irregular.

After some discussion of other possible arrangements of the four lots, Dr. Mark suggested that a cul-de-sac or cluster arrangement with communal open space be considered.

The Commission agreed that planning for a cluster would be difficult if the retail building remains on the property.

Mr. Asadoorian said that his family planned to build four homes, each about 5500 square feet in size. He did not want to place them too close to one another. He said that they had considered dividing the property into four very long lots with four curb cuts onto Cherry Lane. He asked the Commission for guidance.

Ms. Goldstein explained that as long as the plans comply with the Ordinance, Mr. Asadoorian has a right to develop this property. She said that the Township does look more favorably on plans that preserve natural resources.

Mr. Canales explained that this would be considered a minor subdivision if fewer than five houses are planned, and no public improvements are made.

Mr. Davis suggested that Mr. Asadoorian strongly consider razing the retail structure, and conducting some perk tests for the septic systems, to see if a better plan could be designed.

Proposed JMZO Amendment 2005-01: The Commission reviewed proposed JMZO Amendment 2005-01, dealing with agricultural soils.

Mr. Canales explained that there was some discrepancy in terminology between this proposed amendment and nomenclature used in the 2002 Bucks County Soils Survey. He said that the proposed Amendment refers to Class I, II and III Agricultural Soils. This terminology has been eliminated from the Soils Survey, which now refers to “Prime Farmland” and “Statewide Important Farmland”. He said that he was not sure of whether these terms are equivalent to Class I, II and III soils. He has spoken to Mr. Sander about providing some clarification.

Mr. Halderman moved to recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve this amendment subject to clarification of the definitions of “Class I, II, III Agricultural Soils” as related to “Prime Farmland” and “Statewide Important Farmland”. Mr. Fowler seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Fowler moved to adjourn at 10:30 PM. Dr. Mark seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Mary Donaldson
Recording Secretary**