

Planning Commission

**MINUTES
November 6, 2024**

~~Members Present:~~ Bobb Carson, Dave Long, Bruce Whitesell, Neil O'Brien and Angela Kelly.

Mr. Carson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Public Comments on Non-Agenda items – Mr. Bobb Carson, Chair, advised the public audience that the Planning Commission (PC) was directed by the Board of Supervisors (BOS), in January 2023, to work on a draft event venue ordinance. Mr. Carson stated it took 18 + months to work on this, as it is a complicated task. In August 2024, the PC presented their recommendations of standards to be included in the possible event venue ordinance to be reviewed by the BOS. The Board of Supervisors since then has attempted to discuss the topic at meetings and ultimately is sending the recommendations back to PC for further discussion. Mr. Carson explained the Planning Commission is an advisory board to the BOS and that the BOS can take or leave PC recommendations. The public shall get a chance to comment on a proposed ordinance once there is a final draft advertised but we are not there in the process yet. He stated there had been 30+ meetings regarding this topic that were open to the public – which few to no one attended. Mr. Dave Long listed some of the standards the PC addressed in their recommendations to the BOS and a proposed definition for event venues – accessory and principal use. The following issues were addressed in the PC recommendations: zoning district use, parking, maximum events per year, lot size, buffers, hours, structures, septic, capacity, water/food/alcohol, trash, noise/lighting, emergency serviced access, insurance, deed easement restrictions, and notification to the Township and Police Department. It was again stressed this is not for just farm properties as rumor seems to be spreading.

Mr. Mike Clime, 2212 High Meadow, stated he worries about the noise and no police on during the weekends to control it. He stated he thought the ZHB with Pieri Farm was the blueprint for the Township. He said something like this would be more appropriate on Route 309. Mr. Clime stated to enforce the noise ordinance would require police on weekends and that would cost the Township money in overtime. Mr. Clime stated there already is an A-9 Agriculture entertainment use that farms should use.

Mark Schadt, 2257 Pleasant Hollow Road, stated residents were taken by surprise about this ordinance. He stated that, given what happened with Pieri Farm ZHB hearing, he thought the Township would realize the residents don't want weddings at all. He stated something like this should have been placed on the election ballot and the residents would vote on allowing it or not. He stated that if weddings happened indoors and were quiet people wouldn't have an issue with them but they don't want to hear them. He stated that if the use must be allowed, he hopes the PC and BOS would be conservative with it and use maximum enforcement with the noise.

Solicitor MacNair pointed out that according to Municipal Zoning laws, each municipality has to allow for all uses. If a use is not included in the zoning ordinance, someone can file a curative amendment challenge. He stated this issue came up in 1970s and 80s regarding quarries. Solicitor MacNair stated many municipalities have added ordinances on this use, as event venues are popular now. He stated there are different levels of use regarding principal and accessory use. Also, this is not just farms, there are other places having events.

Mr. Bill McCarthy, 1879 Pleasant View Rd, stated his concern is noise. He stated the music lasted until 10:30 p.m. the night Kirkland Farm had a wedding. He said amplified music should stay in an enclosed building.

Ms. Rosie McIlwain, 1879 Pleasant View Road, stated she has hosted 3 weddings in her barn. She said there was no noise after 10 p.m. She said there is a right and wrong way to do this.

Ms. Elizabeth Gunshore, 2670 Old Bethlehem Road, stated when Kirkland Farm had their wedding, she heard drums and the beat all night. She said even when she was on the phone, the person on the other end could hear the drums. She said, as was said before, she doesn't want to hear the wedding music and wants quiet.

Solicitor MacNair described this is considered a new use and as zoning uses change, so do zoning ordinances.

Mr. Dave Yates, 2021 Peppermint Road, stated the party at Kirkland farm was so loud he had to turn up his television to hear it over the music being played at the wedding. He stated the only places weddings should be permitted is along Rt 309.

Comprehensive Plan initiatives – Mr. Carson went through the initiatives and discussed updates.

i. Community Infrastructure & Utilities

(1) Provide reliable power options – (A6); (N. O'Brien – support role) – no new update.

(2) Encourage a resilient building stock – (A15); (B. Carson – lead role) – update provided on development of a funding proposal to American Geophysical Union (AGU) Thriving Earth Exchange Project. The application is completed and now they look to find a scientist to work with Springfield on the project.

(3) Assess wastewater infrastructure and capacity to address community needs (A22); (D. Long – lead role; N. Zane – support role). Jennifer Kintzer of Special Treatment Systems may come speak at the January planning Commission meeting about wastewater package plants. Mr. Hopkins gave an update on the joint meeting Springfield attended with Coopersburg, Richlandtown, Upper Saucon, Bucks Planning Commission and Lehigh County Planning Commission discussing water along Rt 309. They discussed possible options and the possibility of federal funding, perhaps the Quarry going in can assist.

ii. Safety and Mobility

(1) Continue to maintain local road network infrastructure for ease of mobility throughout the Township – (C1); (D. Nicholson – lead role); (C5); (N. Zane – support role) – No update.

(2) Expand, connect, and fund a multimodal network of off-road trails and on-road bike routes (C7, C8-13); (D. Long/D. Nicholson – leaders; A. Kelly, N. O'Brien – support roles) – No update.

iii. Livable Centers

(1) Provide financially accessible housing that is diverse in type and price point (D1-3); (B. Whitesell – Lead role) – Mr. Whitesell said he will have a report ready for January.

(2) Promote neighborhood-scale mixed use development in the villages and hamlets (D4); (B. Whitesell – Lead; (D6); B. Carson – support) – No new update.

iv. Rural & Historic Preservation

(1) Protect natural ecosystems, including natural resources, such as air quality and water quality, forests, and wildlife (E23-27); (N. O'Brien – Lead) – Mr. O'Brien said he hopes to have more information for next meeting and found a few ordinances that can be reviewed.

Discussion -

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) – Supplemental documents were sent with the agenda. The proposed definition of an ADU was discussed and it was decided that it should not include the requirement of a kitchen for units incorporated within, or attached to, the primary residence. Detached ADUs would require a kitchen. Other decisions:

- 1) ADUs will be permitted in all the districts but only as an accessory use for existing residences in the HC and PI districts.
- 2) ADUs may be developed, by right, on lots meeting the minimum lot size for residential use in the respective zoning district. The property shall meet all setback and maximum impervious surface requirements.
- 3) An ADU may be incorporated within either an existing or a new dwelling unit.
- 4) An ADU shall contain no more than two bedrooms; and one bathroom.
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- 5) ADUs may be 30% of the gross square footage of the primary residence or 800 square feet, whichever is greater.
- 6) If a new ADU is constructed, it must be situated within the building envelope, and is not eligible for the accessory structures exception listed in Section 501.4.A.(3).
- 7) A recreational vehicle or mobile home shall not be used as an ADU. An ADU that is detached from the primary dwelling, or is an addition to it, shall have a permanent foundation.
- 8) There shall be, in addition to the required off-street parking for the principal dwelling, at least one, but not more than two, additional off-street parking space(s) for each ADU.
- 9) Applicants may choose to use shared utility meters for the primary structure and the ADU or have one or more separate meters installed for each
- 9) Applicants may choose to use shared utility meters for the primary structure and the ADU or have one or more separate meters installed for each
- 10) An ADU built within the footprint of existing, legal accessory structures are considered not to have changed existing lot coverage.
- 11) ADUs may be created on any lot that meets the minimum lot size required for a single-family dwelling (or town house). Internal accessory dwelling units may be built on any lot with a single-family dwelling (or town house) that is nonconforming solely because the lot is smaller than the minimum size, provided the ADUs would not increase the nonconformity of the residential use with respect to building height, bulk, or lot coverage.

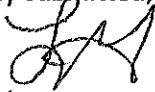
MINUTES

Motion made by Mr. O'Brien, seconded by Mr. Whitesell and carried to adopt the October 17, 2024; minutes as presented.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Long, seconded by Ms. Kelly and carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Gerhart
Secretary/Assistant Zoning Officer