

**Planning Commission Reorganization Meeting
MINUTES**

January 12, 2005

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Peter Lamana, who was appointed as temporary chairman by Jim Brownlow, 2004 Chairman. He opened with the *Pledge of Allegiance*.

Pete Lamana **nominated** Jim Brownlow as chairman for 2005; Walt French **seconded**; motion **passed** unanimously.

Pete Lamana **nominated** Walt French as **vice chairman** for 2005. Barbara Lindtner **seconded**; motion **passed** unanimously.

Pete Lamana **nominated** Barbara Lindtner as **secretary** for 2005. Brad Schultz **seconded**; motion **passed** unanimously.

Members present: Scott Douglas (arrived 7:10), Walt French, Pete Lamana, Barbara Lindtner and Brad Schultz.
Bryan McAdam, representing Bob Wynn, Township Engineer, was present. Absent: Barbara Schmoyer

Planning Commission Comments: Pete Lamana clarified the issue which arose at the December 1, 2004, Planning Commission meeting regarding the 75' or 25' wetland margin. He read the actual motion establishing this margin from the June 20, 1994, Supervisors meeting minutes. This motion clarified that the correct margin is 25', although the change never was made in the printed ordinance book.

Jim Brownlow noted that Barbara Schmoyer, whose 4-year term on the Planning Commission expired on 12/31/04, is not available for another term. Barbara will serve until a suitable replacement is found for her position. Jim noted we have advertised for interested persons to fill this opening. Brad Schultz announced that it will be unlikely he can serve out his term (which expires 12/31/06) on the Planning Commission. His home is on the market and he'll be moving out of the area when it is sold. He is willing to step down whenever a good candidate is available to replace him. Jim Brownlow expressed gratitude for the service of both Barbara and Brad over the past years.

Pete Lamana **moved**, Scott Douglas **seconded**, that the minutes of the December 1, 2004, meeting be adopted as presented. The motion **passed** unanimously.

Public Comment on Agenda Items – Scott Mease requested confirmation that the Seifert Minor Subdivision (under “Correspondence” on the agenda) would be discussed later in the meeting, and Mr. Brownlow advised it would be.

Confirmed Appointments

Thornton Land Development – Mr. Paul Dietz, Urwiler & Walter, Inc., presented for the applicants, Troy and Lisa Thornton, who were also present. This property is on Mine Road close to Route 309. He noted that an additional storage/parking building had been added to the rear of the property that did not appear on the plan the last time it was reviewed by the Planning Commission. This building will be used to store restored older cars inside. Because of this additional building, revisions have been made in the storm water management plan. Additional changes to conform with suggestions in Bob Wynn's December 14, 2004, review letter have also been made.

Referring to the Township Engineer's December 14, 2004, review letter, Mr. Dietz noted that as required in Item 1, neither he nor the Thornton's have received written notification of the special exception approved by the Zoning Board. The Township will contact the Zoning solicitor to obtain this written approval. Additionally, the applicant will attempt to obtain a copy of the wetlands report completed by the previous owner as noted in Item 3.

Regarding Item 9, which relates to the Sewage Facilities Planning Module, the applicant will produce the permit issued by the Bucks County Department of Health. Mr. Dietz stated that because Springfield Township has a holding tank ordinance, it is not necessary to have Planning Modules if the land development plan utilizes a holding tank which uses under 800 gallons per day, which this plan does. The Township Engineer will review this regulation.

Item 13, A, B, C, E, F and G are all “will comply.” However, it is not possible to comply with Item D, since the pipe to be measured is buried under Mine Road; therefore, measurements cannot be obtained. Pete Lamana commented that this issue should be discussed with the engineer.

Walt French is concerned with safety issues relating to Item 5, specifically, the minimum sight distance requirement. Mr. Thornton stated he spoke with PennDot . They did not feel the sight distance would be a problem, but because Mine Road is not a state road, this would be a Township issue.

An additional complication is that the applicants have a 25-foot easement to access their property, but because of an existing utility pole located in that easement, they can only get a 21-foot wide driveway access. The Members requested that our engineer review the driveway/minimum sight issues. Also, they suggested that the applicants explore the possibility of moving an existing utility pole (to permit free access for larger trucks entering or leaving the business), or obtaining an additional easement from the neighbor to widen the driveway and/or decreasing the speed limit to 30 MPH, which would decrease the sight distance requirement.

With regard to Item 4, which contains the waiver requests, applicant will increase outside parking spaces to 8. The waiver requested in 4.B. will not be necessary if this parking space is added.

Pending resolution of the issues relating to 4.C. (driveway/minimum sight issues), no action was taken on the waivers and further discussion of the plan was tabled.

Newman Minor Subdivision – Scott Mease, Mease Engineering, presented for the applicant Majda Newman, who was not present. The applicant proposes to divide this parcel, located on School Road and Route 412, into two single family lots. At their October 6, 2004, meeting, the Planning Commission recommended that the waivers requested under item 3 of the Township Engineer’s September 15, 2004, review letter be approved by the Supervisors. The two outstanding issues in the September 15 review letter—the Planning Module and the wetland delineation report—are now both on file in the Township office. Brad Schultz moved to recommend preliminary final approval for this plan to the Supervisors subject to the satisfactory completion of the issues noted in Bob Wynn’s September 15, 2004, review letter. Walt French seconded the motion; it passed unanimously.

Springtown Country Manor Subdivision – (Walt French excluded himself from the Commission for this discussion.) Attorney Brad Lare, representing Reshetar Realty, opened the presentation. This plan was originally filed in July 2002; reapplication was submitted in July 2003. Mr. Lare presented the Members with copies of the curriculum vitae of Alexander Mac Phee, an engineering geologist from C.V.M. Industries, who will speak later as an expert witness to the geological issues relating to this plan. Scott Mease, Mease Engineering, the engineer for this project, briefly reviewed the plan. This is a 20-lot subdivision located on Drifting Drive just south of Spring Hill. The latest Township Engineer review letter is dated July 1, 2003. The concerns to be addressed related to whether there were any caves, waste materials, etc., under this property. Extensive geological testing has been done, and the applicant would like to receive a recommendation for preliminary approval so that planning modules can be moved forward.

Mr. Lare made available copies of the boring results and Mr. Alexander Mac Phee, presenting as an expert witness, expanded on these reports. He gave a complete report of test borings done for every lot on the proposed site. The test borings were 60’ in depth. He reviewed the project and the questions which had been raised regarding the stability of certain lots for building and the potential for caverns to exist in the ground. He asked the owner to stake out the corner locations of each of the structures planned for the lots. After that was done, borings were drilled on opposing corners of each house. Portions of the site had very high rock lines, meaning solid rock was hit at 2 – 3’ below the surface. On the sites where high rock was hit, which greatly affects the construction of the proposed buildings, an excavator back hoe was brought in, and test pits were dug on opposing corners of those lots to actually look at the rock. Kent Littlefield of SAIC came on site to observe while the test pits were being dug so that he could actually see the results. While this work was being done, a professional geologist logged some of the materials encountered, i.e., where the rock is, what kind of rock it is, and the density and type of soil over the rock, because when all these factors are added up, the results can either make a site stable or unstable for development. After the exploration work was completed, the results were correlated and deficiencies that would not be capable of supporting normal residential structures were looked for. A complete booklet was compiled for each site using the information obtained, and a copy was provided to Reshetar Realty and to Kent Littlefield, who reviewed them. Mr. Mac Phee personally discussed during at least six telephone conversations with Mr. Littlefield the development structures at these locations on each lot.

Some of the lots will be simple to build on; others, it may not be possible to have a basement because of the high rock lines. In at least half the structures, the foundations will be directly on the bedrock. Most of the rock encountered is dolomite (not limestone) which is virtually insoluble and not particularly sink hole prone. The rock also had high shale content. They particularly looked for a situation where the rock at one side of the building would be considerably lower than the rock on the other side of the building. On the contrary, rock surfaces were found to be relatively flat, with depths of 2’ on one side and perhaps 2 ½’ on the other side of the building, which makes a very sound building site. Coming from the higher rock down towards Drifting Drive, there is an overlay of material—clay with boulders in it—that is probably glacial in origin. This is material that does not erode, and with sufficient cover like this, the danger of sink holes decreases immensely because the ground water doesn’t permeate the deep clay content.

On Lot 1 where the detention basin is planned, they attempted to determine what had caused the closed depression that had been noted. The depression on Lot 1 appeared to be about 20' deep. A test pit was dug (about 8 or 9' deep) in the bottom of the hole on Lot 1. This original hole was definitely a man-made feature, not a natural sink hole. The top of weathered limestone was touched at the bottom of the hole. There was no hard rock that would have indicated a quarry for limestone and it is suspected this pit may have been used for clay for brick production in the early 1800s. The other possibility is that it may have been an iron ore pit. In either case, there is no indication it was used for a limestone quarry.

On Lot 2, eight test pits were dug, and it was discovered that this was where fill had been placed. Mr. Mac Phee recommended that this material be removed and replaced with suitable fill material. The applicant has agreed to do this.

The material which had been provided for the Members included raw data showing how deep the borings and test pits were for each lot and what was found at each level. Mr. Mac Phee concluded his presentation and opened the floor for questions. There were numerous questions, and after discussion, it was determined that Kent Littlefield of SAIC should review the reports submitted by Mr. Mac Phee and if Mr. Littlefield was satisfied that the reports validated safe development on this site, the plan could then be recommended for approval by the Members. Specifically, Mr. Brownlow was interested in hearing from Kent Littlefield that he was comfortable that Lots 14 and 16 were suitable for building a home. Barbara Lindtner also questioned whether there would be design changes to the total tract if there were any lots that were not buildable. Scott Douglas questioned the location of the caves on the property. Mr. Mac Phee explained that whatever caves may exist were covered with hard rock of such a depth that even if there was a collapse of the cave, there would be no surface expression of that because of the depth of the hard rock above it.

In response to concerns about hydraulic loading raised by Scott Douglas, Mr. Mac Phee stated that one of the main ideas of a sand mound is that evaporation transpiration will take care of a major part of the water load. If it does not, then the sand mound has not been designed the way it is supposed to be. So, theoretically, you should not get the load that you would get out of an in-ground system. He felt that hydraulic loading of the system from the waste water management design would not be an issue. The rock is stable enough, even with the open cracks/joints that are in it, because the elevation of the site is such that it promotes rapid drainage down to the water table, which is probably 80-90 feet down. The sand mounds are supposed to get most of that water up in the air. He has, on occasion, set monitoring wells to check them to see if they do flood. If they do not, the sand mound is doing what it should be doing. With the normal load from a septic system being about 300-500 gallons a day, he doubted whether the load out of a sand mound exceeds 100 gallons per day. Through the farming cycle, this site has been exposed to different hydraulic loads repeatedly in the past. Before it was in the farming cycle, it had a much lighter hydraulic load. He noted that although he is a geologist, not a hydrologist, he does not feel the impact from the development itself would affect the creeks, assuming that the sand mounds work the way they are supposed to.

The Members thanked Mr. Mac Phee for his informative presentation. Mr. Brownlow requested that Kent Littlefield be contacted prior to the February 2 Planning Commission meeting to resolve all the questions raised during tonight's discussion. Mr. Reshetar is willing to comply with all the elements raised in Bob Wynn's July 1, 2003, review letter. Barbara Lindtner requested a review letter from Bob Wynn if there were any other design issues to be addressed. This plan was tabled until the February 2, 2005, meeting and the Members gave permission because of the change in the date of this meeting that should a resubmission be necessary, it could come in later than the normal submission date, which would have been today. Mr. Brownlow requested that the zoning officer be invited to attend the next meeting.

Solomon Asser Subdivision – Todd Myers, Cowan Associates, Inc., presented for the applicant. This is a three-lot subdivision on Lehnenberg Road. Mr. Cowan indicated the applicant planned to comply with all items in Bob Wynn's December 16, 2004, review letter but needed to discuss Item 2, which has to do with planning modules for the on-lot sewage systems.

Mr. Asser desired to have Lot 3 combined with his existing land holdings; however, during the sewer testing, they learned there was an existing permit for the system. When the planning modules were submitted to the Bucks County Department of Health for their review, a letter was received from Art Carlson indicating that this 10-acre tract is under Rural Residency. There is one permitted system and one existing system. The Rural Residency existing system is for the existing building. The permitted system, which was initially thought to be the only system on the site, was for the accessory building, which has a toilet and sink. This means Lot 3 can no longer be combined into the existing land holdings because to do so would nullify this Rural Residency. For this reason, Lot 3 will be a separate building lot owned by Mr. Asser.

The Members could not recommend preliminary approval of this plan because the planning modules were not available. Further discussion was tabled until the February 2, 2005, Planning Commission meeting.

Brian Lloyd Subdivision – Todd Myers, Cowan Associates, Inc., presented for the applicant, Brian Lloyd who also attended. Mr. Lloyd is interested in subdividing this 24-acre property, located on Salem Road, into three lots. Mr. Lloyd plans to build his own home on the 16-acre Lot 3 and will deed restrict Lot 3 from further development. He will build a home for sale on Lot 2 and ultimately will sell Lot 1.

The applicant plans to comply with the issues in Bob Wynn's December 20, 2004, review letter. The planning module approvals for this project have been obtained from the Health Department. Regarding Item 3.C in the waiver list, Mr. Myers asked that a representative from the Township Engineer's office visit the site to determine if the shoulder/swale improvements can be accomplished. There are utility poles near the road and several big boulders which would make it difficult to do road improvements as outlined in 3.C. The applicant is willing to do the improvements if it is determined that they can be done. They plan to return on February 2, 2005, if the outstanding issues can be resolved.

Pete Lamana **moved** that we recommend approval of waivers as noted in 3.A, B, D and E in Bob Wynn's December 20, 2004, review letter. Walt French **seconded** the motion; it **passed** unanimously.

Duke Minor Subdivision – Todd Myers, Cowan Associates, Inc., presented for the applicants, Christopher and Marion Duke, who were also present. The applicants propose to divide this 21.49 acre site, located between Wreccics Road, Richlandtown Pike, and Gruversville Road, into two single family detached dwelling lots. A single family dwelling with driveway access on Wreccics Road is proposed for Lot 1. Lot 2 contains an existing single family dwelling, barn and driveway with access on Wreccics Road. The original submission showed a driveway accessing onto Wreccics Road; however, the location was within the 75' wetland margin, and was revised as requested in Bob Wynn's December 14, 2004, review letter. Since then, Mr. Myers received Bucks County Conservation District approval on the original driveway submission. He would like to revise the plan to utilize the installed, permitted driveway. The Members honored the applicant's request to keep the driveway location in the previously permitted location.

Walt French **moved** to recommend preliminary final approval subject to satisfactory completion of conditions outlined in Bob Wynn's December 14, 2004, review letter. Pete Lamana **seconded**; the motion **passed** unanimously.

New Business

The following plans have been accepted by the Township and will be placed on the February 2, 2005, Planning Commission agenda as Confirmed Appointments pending receipt of engineering review letters:

1. Perfecta Awnings Land Development
2. Cohen Major Subdivision – Lehenberg Road

Old Business

Chairman Brownlow reminded the Members and the public about the 3rd Zoning Ordinance Planning Meeting scheduled for January 20, at 7:00 p.m

Correspondence

Seifert Minor Subdivision – The Township received correspondence dated December 20, 2004, from Mease Engineering, Inc., regarding the proposed subdivision of this 29.14 acre parcel located on Lower Saucon Road, on behalf of applicants David Seifert and Laura Ray. Scott Mease, Mease Engineering, Inc., presented tonight for the applicants. The lot to be created will be located almost entirely within Lower Saucon Township. Approximately two-thirds of the parent tract is located in Lower Saucon Township, and there is no earth disturbance proposed in Springfield Township. Lower Saucon required the applicant to submit the plan to Springfield Township for their review. Pete Lamana **moved** that a letter be sent to Lower Saucon Township indicating that Springfield Township will have no comment on the proposed subdivision. Scott Douglas **seconded**; the motion **passed** unanimously.

Public Comments

Scott Mease indicated that he had submitted a number of plans which were approved at 25' since the wetland margin change to 25' was made in 1994.

Scott Douglas reminded those present that the Source Water Protection Plan meeting would be held here tomorrow evening (January 13) at 7:30 p.m. This is the first meeting where the consultant will actually present the protection zone.

Planning Commission Comments

None

Adjournment

At 9:35 p.m., Pete Lamana **moved** to adjourn the meeting. Barbara Lindtner **seconded** the motion; it **passed** unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra L. Everitt
Secretary
Next Meeting: February 2, 2005