

February 14, 2006

TOWN BOARD AND PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP

The purpose of the meeting was for the Town Board and the Planning Commission to review possible changes to the Development Code. Town Board members present were Chairman Dennis Seefeldt, Mike Hinz, Nancy Madden, Blair Joselyn, and Mike Harnetty. Planning Commission members present were Chairman Chris Ness, Jim Malmquist, Donnette Yehle, and Peter Schwarz. Also present were Township Attorney Dave Hebert and Township Planner Dick Thompson.

Major Subdivision Approval Process

Blair Joselyn introduced a series of issues (problems) in regards to the current process of approving a subdivision plat. The question of a pre-concept meeting with the developer, a subcommittee of the Board and Planning Commission, Town Planner, representatives from the Rural Landscape Preservation Committee and Park and Rec, a professional design consultant, and possibly the Town Engineer was addressed. In this meeting, an agreement on the general layout of the project, the focal point, and preservation of open space would be decided. Discussion included the fact that the decision to plan is up to the rights of the owner and developer, but they do need to follow set guidelines. It may be possible to employ a Landscape Architect to work for the Township in setting these guidelines. Mike Harnetty felt that it is critical to have good, accurate information in regards to making decisions as to land preservation. It was the consensus of those present to change the 100% density bonus given to developers when planning a cluster. They would like to see a 25% bonus given for a cluster, then adding one additional lot for community well, one additional lot for community septic, and possibly additional lots awarded for preservation of environmental issues. It was felt that developers must understand that they need to meet the township goals and have to "argue up" their case for bonus lots. A decision to consult with three professional design firms was made. Blair Joselyn has information from Applied Ecological Services, Hoisington Koegler Group, and Stephen Mastey, and will plan a future meeting with these consultants to get their insight into how the Board can proceed with changes. Planner Dick Thompson will further research the issue and will gather information as to what neighboring communities' ordinances cover, and also what the pros and cons of changing the process would be.

Adult Entertainment

On the issue of adult entertainment business becoming established in the town, it was felt that the language in the Development Code must be worded in a way that strongly discourages them from operating in the community. Dave Hebert pointed out that their use cannot be prevented, only the location can be restricted. Surrounding communities currently have ordinances in place regulating the location and licensing of adult businesses. The consensus of the Board and Commission was for Dave Hebert to draw up an ordinance regulating adult oriented businesses.

Tree Preservation

Curt Hadland, representing the Rural Landscape and Preservation Committee, has submitted a proposal specifying what a developer needs to do when replacing wooded land (in regards to species and quality of trees). The Development Code currently has a tree removal policy in place. Curt Hadland was asked to review the current ordinance and recommend if the language needs to be strengthened in regards to a restoration plan of trees.

Additions to Agenda

An introduction to Planner Dick Thompson's Draft Study on Community Residences was presented. Mr. Thompson commented on the review as follows: The definition always refers to these as adult foster care facilities. State laws are very specific, and homes serving six or fewer residents must be a permitted use in appropriate districts. New Scandia lists them as a use with a Certificate of Compliance. Group homes are licensed through the Washington County Department of Human Resources. It was suggested that a representative from the County Dept. be invited to speak to the Town Board, and explain why Scandia has a higher per capita concentration than other communities. From a zoning perspective, the Township cannot impose more restrictions on their location to schools, playgrounds, etc., as they are a permitted use. Some types of community residences that are licensed through the Department of Corrections may be addressed through an ordinance.

A follow-up Workshop has been scheduled for March 13, 2006 at 8:00 a.m. Mike Hinz made a motion to adjourn and the meeting adjourned.



Brenda Eklund
Recording Secretary