

**ROCKLAND TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION**

**MEETING MINUTES
May 25, 2021**

The monthly meeting of the Rockland Township Planning Commission was held on May 25, 2021 beginning at 7:30PM. The following members of the Planning Commission were present: Richard Mazich, William Fredericks, Nancy Ogden, Nathan Roush and William McFadden. Also in attendance were: Township Solicitor Jim Smith, Township Supervisor Nathan Ohlinger, Township Supervisor David Wartzluft, Township Supervisor Michele Albright, Jackie Hollenbach with Mack Engineering, and interested citizens.

The minutes of the April 27, 2021 Planning Commission meeting were reviewed. On a motion by Nathan Roush, seconded by Nancy Ogden, the minutes of the April 27, 2021 Planning Commission meeting were approved as presented. There was no public comment. All were in favor. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Zoning Ordinance Review/Amendment Project Update – Township Solicitor Jim Smith recommended Township officials consider a different path forward to move this project along more quickly and more efficiently. Attorney Smith spoke to several attorneys and believes the best approach forward would be to subcontract the work to an expert with extensive zoning ordinance writing and rewriting experience (such as Urban Research & Development Corporation). The decision to subcontract the work to a firm or agency which specializes in ordinance review and revisions would help to ensure a final document with defensible text.

Attorney Smith offered Township officials with two ways to obtain a defensible text: 1) hire an attorney to review the revised ordinance for cohesive use of language; or 2) have a non-attorney expert on zoning ordinance review and drafting prepare a document similar to those already implemented elsewhere (in communities similar to Rockland Township). Firms or agencies who routinely perform this work will also be knowledgeable about the latest zoning issues affecting municipalities (such as 5G wireless communications, etc.). Jackie Hollenbach reminded Township officials that this project began in October 2016 as a revision to the Township's existing Zoning Ordinance, not a complete re-write. Jackie Hollenbach also offered to check with the County of Berks to inquire as to whether the County would have staff/resources available to review our zoning ordinance.

Township officials discussed at length the desired path forward with this project, including the possibility of excluding 5G wireless communications text and regulations at this time. At the conclusion of the discussion, Township officials were in agreement to have Attorney Smith incorporate all the changes previously discussed and provide the draft document to Jackie Hollenbach for final updates. Once the fully updated copy is available from Jackie Hollenbach, Township officials agreed to review the draft ordinance and then discuss a plan forward (possibly as early as at next month's Planning Commission meeting). Attorney Smith confirmed that he would reach out to Charlie Schmehl at Urban Research & Development Corporation to assess whether his company would be willing to perform a legal defensibility review of the final draft Zoning Ordinance document, in lieu of a complete re-write of the ordinance.

NEW BUSINESS

Zoning Hearing Board Application – A variance application was received from Robert & Alexis Eisenhart, 62 Cider Mill Road on May 11, 2021 requesting relief of the 40' side yard setback requirements (Section 4.05.2) to place a second garage at the end of the existing driveway which is 33' from the property line. The Planning Commission may submit comments to the Zoning Hearing Board regarding the variance application. The public hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, June 23, 2021 at 7:00PM at the Rockland Township Building. After review of the variance application and a brief discussion, on a motion by William Fredericks, seconded by Richard Mazich, the Planning Commission agreed not to offer any comments on the application to the Zoning Hearing Board. There was no public comment. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Zoning Hearing Board Application – A variance application was received from Harold Weaver, 16 Stimmel Road on May 24, 2021 requesting relief of the 200’ setback requirement from all property lines and dwellings (Section 9.02.4) to construct a 50’ x 48’ coverall hoop building (agricultural building) for manure storage, equipment storage and animal housing. The Planning Commission may submit comments to the Zoning Hearing Board regarding the variance application. After review of the variance application and a brief discussion, on a motion by Nancy Ogden, seconded by William McFadden, the Planning Commission agreed not to offer any comments on the application to the Zoning Hearing Board. There was no public comment. All were in favor. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:17PM on a motion by Richard Mazich, seconded by William Fredericks.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Krall
Secretary