

SWATARA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON AUGUST 5, 2024

The Swatara Township Planning Commission regular meeting was called to order by Chairman Chad Martin at 7:02 pm at the Swatara Township Municipal building, 599 Eisenhower Boulevard, Harrisburg, PA. The call to order was followed by the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Members of the Commission present:

Chad Martin, Chairman	Karen Bear
Chuck Bowser, Vice Chairman	Katie Ibberson
ABSENT: Mark Caruso	

Also Present: Robert Ihlein, Township Director of Planning and Zoning and Secretary for the Commission, Danielle Derolf, P.E. & Joe Pedone with Dawood Engineering, and Karen Dixon, planner with Dauphin County Planning Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Ibberson made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 2, 2024, meeting. Mr. Bowser seconded the motion. The motion to accept the minutes passed with 4 votes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS, INCLUDING STORMWATER MANAGEMENT ISSUES

None at this time.

OLD BUSINESS - SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT PLANS:

a. Plan No. 2023-12C: “Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan for Swatara Paxton Developers LLC – Proposed Wawa Food Market and Fueling Station”, dated 11/21/2023
Project: proposing to redevelop the current Hoss’s Restaurant site on the corner of Route 322 and Bridge Road to a Wawa store and fueling station
Location: 9009 Bridge Road
Applicant: Swatara Paxton Developers, LLC
PLAN STATUS: Accepted for review on 12/02/2023; BOC ACTION BY (90 days), EXTENSION GRANTED BY APPLICANT TO AUGUST 14, 2024

WAIVER REQUESTS: none at this time

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The applicant was not present. Mr. Ihlein noted that he has been in contact with the attorney for the applicant to obtain a time extension for the BOC to act. **ACTION:** *There was a consensus to postpone action on this plan until the September meeting.*

b. Plan No. 2024-03C: “Preliminary / Final Land Development Plan for Swatara Exchange”, dated 02/27/2024, revised 05/10/2024

Project: re-development of the Harrisburg Mall property with retail and flex space buildings and outparcels for related uses.

Location: 3501 Paxton Street

Applicant: Harrisburg Mall LP

PLAN STATUS: Accepted for review 03/05/2024: BOC ACTION BY JUNE 4, 2024 (90 days);
EXTENSION GRANTED BY APPLICANT TO AUGUST 14, 2024

WAIVER REQUESTS:

1. Section 253-10A - 11 requiring the submission of a Preliminary Plan
2. Section 253-32 – requiring the construction of sidewalks in specific locations.
3. Section 253.19.B.3 – regulating the subdivision and land development of properties that front on a limited access highway.

The applicant was not present.

ACTION: *The applicant requested the review to be postponed to the September meeting.*

c. Plan No. 2024-04C: “Preliminary Land Development Plan for Swatara Township Bishop Park”

Project: development of a new municipal park

Location: Highland Avenue near Eisenhower Boulevard

Applicant: Swatara Township Board of Commissioners

PLAN STATUS: Accepted for review 04/02/2024: BOC ACTION BY JULY 4, 2024 (90 days);

WAIVER REQUESTS:

1. Section 247- see list of 7 waivers from the Stormwater and Land Development ordinances

Betsy Davison, PE of H.E. Black & Associates was present to discuss the revised plans and the 16-page response letter to the comments received from HRG and Dawood. The five waivers of the SWO and 2 waivers of the SLDO were discussed. The current plans are now a “Preliminary / Final Land Development Plan” and show features of both phases. Final plans for Phase 2 will be submitted at some point in the future. Commissioner Tom Connolly was present and provided context of the overall vision for the park. The elements in Phase 1 consist of the driveway, stormwater management, trails, dog park, parking and other features that are being funded with county and state grants. There are a few comments from the plan reviewers that still need to be addressed. She will return next month to address them.

ACTION: *There was a consensus to postpone action on this plan until the September meeting.*

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d. Plan No. 2024-05R: “Preliminary / Final Land Development Plan for Townhome Development at 425 Pear Avenue”, dated 05/28/2024

Project: development of 12 new townhouses

Location: Pear and Plum Streets, Rutherford

Applicant: Green Acres Investment LLC

PLAN STATUS: accepted for review on June 4, 2024; BOC action by September 4, 2024

WAIVER REQUESTS:

1. Section 253-10A - 11 requiring the submission of a Preliminary Plan
2. Section 253-10A (1)(b)(5) – separate drawing in 100-foot scale

The applicant was not present. Mr. Ihlein reported that he sent an email to the applicant after the meeting last month to relay the concerns of the residents that attended the meeting and those who submitted petitions opposing the development. He also sent them information on the various concerns of reviewers and Commission. He had not heard back from the applicant at the time of this meeting.

Engineer Derolf reported that by definition of streets and roadways, Pear Avenue and Plum Street are “alleys”. Based on field observations, the width and the overall road conditions would not be sufficient to handle the proposed traffic. More traffic would cause the condition of the road to deteriorate more quickly than without it.

ACTION: The Commission asked Mr. Ihlein to check with the Solicitor if the inadequacy of the streets is sufficient reason to disapprove the proposed plan, and if the Township could require the developer to rebuild the streets as a condition of approval. There was a consensus to postpone action on this plan until the September meeting. Mr. Ihlein will also contact the applicant for an extension of the time for action by the BOC.

e. Plan No. 2024-06R: “Preliminary Land Development Plan for 10 Mars Street Apartments”, dated June 1, 2024

Project: proposing to redevelop a lot with an existing building with one new apartment building

Location: 10 Mars Street

Applicant: Aztlan Investment

PLAN STATUS: accepted for review on July 2, 2024; BOC action by October 2, 2024

WAIVER REQUESTS: none at this time

The applicant was not present. Mr. Ihlein reported that the applicant had notified him to suspend review until further notice because some changes will need to be made to the plans.

ACTION: There was a consensus to postpone action on this plan until the September meeting.

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NEW BUSINESS - SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Plan No. 2024-07R: “Preliminary / Final Minor Subdivision Plan for 5700 Chambers Hill Road and 5651 Plainview Road for Paul C. Glaser”, dated 02/20/2024

Project: proposing to subdivide 2 parcels and re-configure lot lines to create a new parcel

Location: 5651 Plainview Road

Applicant: Paul C. Glaser

PLAN STATUS: new plan submission

WAIVER REQUESTS:

1. Section 253-10A - 11 requiring the submission of a Preliminary Plan
2. Section 253-24.B(1)(b) regarding recreation and open space
3. Section 253-31 requiring curbs
4. Section 253-32 regarding sidewalks, pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths

Jim Hartman, PE of Honor Engineering was present to introduce the plan. This is a minor subdivision plan, and no development is being proposed. One new lot is being created as a possible future building lot.

ACTION: Mr. Bowser made a motion to accept the plans for review. Mrs. Ibberson seconded the motion. The vote was 4 to 0 to accept the plans.

OLD BUSINESS – PLANNING INFORMATION, ISSUES AND ORDINANCES

Discussion regarding land use and zoning issues selected by the Commission that may be addressed and recommended to the Board of Commissioners:

This list submitted in January 2024 for suggested clarifications and corrections to the zoning ordinance:

- a. Improved definitions of lots and yards with new graphics
- b. Minimum lot sizes for dwelling units in the Commercial zoning districts (see “Attachment 2” from ordinance)
- c. “Home Occupation” – the wording used in the definition section is different than that used in additional regulations 2095-96.D(9) – “minor” vs “light”, etc.
- d. “Night Club” – no definition, plus the Use Table H indicates there are additional requirements in 295-39, but there are none
- e. Commercial Fences – no distinction in the zoning ordinance made between residential and commercial uses. The current maximum height for all fences is 6 feet.
- f. *(NEW FOR MARCH)* – *industrial scale food & beverage processing including beer brewing, alcohol distilling, vinegar & pickling of foods, sugar refining.* These uses are not mentioned in the Township zoning ordinance and are regulated in the City of Harrisburg ordinance

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Discussion: No new information was presented during the meeting. Mr. Ihlein has started a list of common requests for waivers and other items that would be used for an update to the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. He has also received a list from the Board of Commissioners of items to include in an update to the Zoning Ordinance. The subjects include sign regulations, the number of dwelling units permitted in a multi-family building, any new or emerging land uses not currently addressed in the ordinance, and evaluating overall compatibility of the 3 main zoning districts with each other.

OTHER BUSINESS – PLANNING INFORMATION, ISSUES AND ORDINANCES

There was no other business discussed during the meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Ms. Dixon reported that Mr. Steve Deck will be retiring as the Executive Director of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission at the end of August. The Board of the Commission has selected Andrew Bomberger, a current member of the staff, to be the new director.

Next meeting will be held on Monday, September 3, 2024

COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS

There were no additional comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Ibberson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Bear seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Ihlein

Secretary