

SWATARA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON DECEMBER 2, 2024

The Swatara Township Planning Commission regular meeting was called to order by Chairman Chad Martin at 7:00 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
Mark Caruso	

Also Present: Robert Ihlein, Township Director of Planning and Zoning and Secretary for the Commission, Joe Pedone, EIT, 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 November 4, 2024, meeting. Mr. Bowser seconded the motion. The motion to accept the minutes passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS, INCLUDING STORMWATER MANAGEMENT ISSUES

None.

OLD BUSINESS - SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT PLANS:

a. 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, THEN TO 11/13/2024, THEN TO 2/12/2025

WAIVER REQUESTS:

1. Section 253-10A - 11 requiring the submission of a Preliminary Plan

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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.

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion.

ACTION: The applicant requested the review to be postponed to the January 7, 2025 meeting.

b. 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; 2nd EXTENSION GRANTED BY APPLICANT TO 11/29/2024; 3rd EXTENSION TO 04/09/2025

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

DISCUSSION: The applicant was not present. Mr. Ihlein reported that the applicant has granted another extension of the review time to April 2025.

ACTION: There was a consensus to postpone action on this plan until the January 7th meeting.

c. 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 June 4, 2024; BOC ACTION BY SEPTEMBER 2, 2024; EXTENSION GRANTED BY APPLICANT TO 10/30/2024; SECOND EXTENSION TO 11/29/2024; 3RD EXTENSION TO 02/28/2025

WAIVER REQUESTS: none at this time

DISCUSSION: The applicant was not present. Mr. Ihlein reported that the applicant granted another time extension to February 2025

ACTION: There was a consensus to postpone action on this plan until the January 7th meeting.

d. Plan No. 2024-08R: “Preliminary / Final Lot Add-On for Roth / Ortega”, dated 08/26/2024

Project: proposing to subdivide the Roth lot and add on to the Ortega lot; creation of a non-conforming lot size approved by Zoning Hearing Board case number 2024-002.

Location: 955 and 961 Orchard Drive

Applicants: Alice M. Roth and Diane R. Ortega

PLAN STATUS: Accepted for review on October 8th; BOC ACTION BY JANUARY 8, 2025

WAIVER REQUESTS: none

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DISCUSSION: No one was present to represent the applicant. Mr. Ihlein noted that a time extension for the review would be needed and that he would contact the applicant's engineer.

ACTION: There was a consensus to postpone the review until the January 7th meeting.

e. Plan No. 2024-09R: “Final Minor Subdivision Plan for Fleming Subdivision” dated 09/23/2024

Project: proposing to re-subdivide 3 parcels into 5 parcels

Location: 91 and 101 Sylvan Ridge Road

Applicants: Joy W. and Wayne S. Fleming

PLAN STATUS: Accepted for review on October 8th ; **BOC ACTION BY JANUARY 8, 2025**

WAIVER REQUESTS:

2 waivers and 5 deferrals

DISCUSSION: Jose Garcia of Navarro & Wright Engineers was present to represent the applicant. There was discussion regarding the correct waivers and deferrals that should be requested. There were no comments available from Dawood Engineering at this time. Mr. Ihlein noted that a time extension for the review will be needed. Mr. Garcia will contact his client in this regard.

ACTION: There was a consensus to postpone the review until the January 7th meeting.

f. Plan No. 2024-10R: “The Grove at Spring Creek” – yield plan submission dated 10/28/2024

Project: proposing a residential subdivision and land development project on 121 acres. There is additional acreage in Lower Paxton Township that is not included in this proposal.

Location: 61st Street and Crusader Way

Applicants: MCN Land Holdings, LLC

PLAN STATUS: accepted for review on November 4, 2024

DISCUSSION: Mr. Joel McNaughton, Esq. and Mr. Tim Mellot, PE were present to represent the applicant. Their desire is to utilize the “Open Space Plan Option” in the zoning ordinance. The ordinance describes the steps to be taken, and the first step is for the applicant to present a “Yield Plan” and an “Existing Features Plan”. The Planning Commission and the Township Engineer are to review these to determine the number of building lots that could be “yielded” using the lot size requirements of the single-family residential zoning district. The Zoning Officer is to make the final determination based on their recommendation. Once this happens the applicant can take the second step and design the plan under the open space option, which provides a 25% bonus of additional lots if the requirements are followed. Commission members asked questions about lots that are shown to be under high voltage power lines, ownership of the open space land, and easements around any stormwater management basins. Mr. Ihlein asked if the 2 plan drawings can be combined to see how the proposed lots are affected by steep slopes and wetlands. Mr. Mellot said he would provide that to everyone within a week.

ACTION: There was a consensus to continue the review at the January 7th meeting.

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NEW BUSINESS - SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Plan No. 2024-11R: “Final Minor Subdivision Plan for Maxie Wiley III” dated 11/18/2024

Project: proposing subdivide 1 parcel into 4 parcels

Location: 700 Second Street

Applicants: Maxie Wiley III and Angela M. Wiley

PLAN STATUS: Submitted for review on 11/20/2024

WAIVER REQUESTS:

1. Section 253-10A - 11 requiring the submission of a Preliminary Plan
2. Section 253-24B.(1)(b) requiring dedication of open space or fee in lieu of

DISCUSSION: Mr. Mark Romeo, PLS was present to represent the applicant. The Wiley’s would like this parcel subdivided so that the new parcels can be given to family members. Each of the lots would contain approximately 1.2 acres. No construction is contemplated at this time.

ACTION: Mrs. Ibberson made a motion to accept the plans for review. The motion was seconded by Mr. Caruso, and the motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS – PLANNING INFORMATION, ISSUES AND ORDINANCES

Land use and zoning issues selected by the Board of Commissioners and the Planning Commission that may be addressed in future ordinance updates.

DISCUSSION: 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.

ACTION: There was a consensus of the Board having Mr. Ihlein to put all of the notes and suggestions together in an outline that could be presented to the Board of Commissioners to consider directing the Township Solicitor to prepare the zoning amendment language that would be needed to create a draft ordinance for public review and comment.

OTHER BUSINESS – PLANNING INFORMATION, ISSUES AND ORDINANCES

a. Request from St. John Properties to submit a letter of planning consistency to be submitted to the PA Department of Community and Economic Development for funding assistance related to the re-development of the former Harrisburg Mall.

ACTION: Mr. Bowser made a motion to approve the letter and have Mr. Martin sign it. Mrs. Ibberson seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

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b. The Commission established their meeting schedule for 2025 as follows

Jan. 7	Feb. 4	March 4	April 1	May 6	June 3
July 1	Aug. 4	Sept. 2	Oct.7	Nov. 3	Dec. 1

ACTION: Mr. Ihlein will have these dates published in the Patriot News as required by the Municipalities Planning Code

COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Zoning Hearing Board meeting to be held on Thursday, December 19, 2024, at 7:00 pm:

a. Case No. 2024-06: Turner Automotive Corporation – request for a variance from Section 295-112.A limiting the maximum sign face area of an on-premises freestanding sign to 60 square feet. The applicant is proposing to replace an existing sign box mounted on a pylon with a new sign that would have a sign face area of 150 square feet on their property located at 4201 Chambers Hill Road. The parcel identification number is 63-027-151 which is located in the Limited Manufacturing (M-L) zoning district.

b. Issue the Decision of the Swatara Township Zoning Hearing Board in the Smith Land & Improvement Corporation matter pursuant to the Remand Order of the Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas of October 24, 2024, to number 2022-CV-06770-LU. The Zoning Hearing Board will issue the Decision granting the appeal of Smith Land & Improvement Corporation from the determination of the Zoning Officer pursuant to the Commonwealth Court Opinion in case number 174 C.D. 2023.

c. Tree Lighting Ceremony to be held on December 3rd (tomorrow)

d. Next meeting – determined to be January 7, 2025.

COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Bowser noted that there has been news articles that more school districts are investigating and investing in large scale solar projects to help reduce their utility bills.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Bowser made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Ibberson seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Ihlein, Secretary