

**WEST DEER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
FEBRUARY 25, 2021 (Via Zoom)**

The Meeting was called to order with the following members in attendance:

John Butala, Kathy Rojik, Patrick Stark, Robert Bechtold, Alan Banks and Mark Schmidt

Absent Members: Suzanne Garlena

Other Attendees: William Payne (Code Enforcement Officer)

Scott Shoup (Shoup Engineering)

Gavin Robb (Solicitor)

Dorothy Moyta (Zoning & Planning Administrator)

Outline and Order of Meeting

1. Approval of January Minutes
2. Zoning Ordinance Revisions/ Municipal Ordinances Updates – Zoning and Street Map Updates – Screening Table Updates
3. Workshop Meeting: Public Comments

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Under Zoning Ordinance Revisions, Mr. Stark wanted to change Item #12 by removing the ‘for agriculture and’ so that Item #12 now reads “Mr. Stark said that R needs to add additional language that the R designation is to preserve the Rural and agricultural uses of the Township.” A motion was then made by Mr. Schmidt to approve the December Meeting Minutes as amended and seconded by Mr. Bechtold. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Zoning Ordinance Revisions – Zoning and Street Map Updates

Mr. Payne presented the Zoning and Street Map with updates and the following comments were made:

1. Mr. Payne noted that he has added McIntyre Heights, Copper Creek trail, Eastview Estates, and Oakwood Heights. In reference to Zoning, he suggested the vacant Elmendorf (tax parcel 1668-S-271) property to be changed to R3 from Industrial. When it was subdivided there was discussion on this and since it now fronts an existing residential neighborhood off of Spruce Street. At the time the property owner was open to either options since he was selling it but did not want to limit his options. The Township has recently gotten a use variance request for this parcel to build a home so it would make sense to change it in the future so it has common zoning standards for setbacks.
2. Mr. Schmidt said that in reference to the Elmendorf property, they would need to install a buffer at the industrial boundaries.

3. Mr. Payne said that in reference to the Elmendorf property, he will reach out to the applicant and see if he can save trees for the buffer. He will do this quickly as the trees may be being removed now.
4. Mr. Robb asked how a PRD was identified on the Zoning map as the zoning is removed when a property changes to a PRD.
5. Mr. Schmidt said it starts out as an R-1, R-2, etc. and there is no reference to it being a PRD on the map.
6. Mr. Robb said that it doesn't matter what the underlying zoning was since the PRD changes the zoning it needs to be reflected on the zoning map.
7. Mr. Shoup agrees with Mr. Robb.
8. John Butala asked whether the PRD boundaries must be designated.
9. Mr. Robb said yes and didn't want stay on this subject and hijack the meeting.
10. It was determined that only 2 PRD's exist: McIntyre heights and the Links at Deer Run.

Zoning Ordinance Revisions - Screening Table Updates

Mr. Payne presented 2 different options for the Screening Table Update and the comments were as follows:

1. Mr. Schmidt liked Option 1.
2. Mr. Butala liked Option 1 as Option 2 is not as specific and could allow for interpretation.
3. Option 1 was liked by all. Mr. Payne also felt that Option 1 was best.
4. Mr. Robb asked what " Adjoining Pre-Existing or Permitted Use" at the top of the table meant. Mr. Payne stated that terminology was taken from the existing table and was appropriate because there were a lot of unconforming uses that currently exist.
5. Mr. Robb felt that there needed to be something added for undeveloped adjacent properties in the screening table.
6. Mr. Payne said that existing trees can be used as buffer in the land development portion of the project.
7. Mr. Schmidt said that existing land topography can also be used as a buffer.
8. Mr. Banks said that the Elmendorf property must meet all required buffers.
9. Mr. Schmidt asked whether the current Ordinance requires land development in change of use. Mr. Payne sated that the Ordinance does not require it if it is a similar use.

10. Mr. Robb stated that “suggestions” in the Ordinance would not hold up as well as requirements that were stated in black and white.
11. Mr. Robb asked that Mr. Payne create a category for vacant or undeveloped land.
12. Mr. Banks would like to see the details of the 3 screening categories and will be prepared to discuss them at the next meeting. Mr. Payne will email Mr. Banks the descriptions.
13. Mr. Payne is working on finding any additional definitions that need to be in the ordinance.
14. Mr. Schmidt asked whether dehydrator facilities should be allowed in all districts or only in the same districts as gas wells.
15. Mr. Robb asked whether dehydrators should be between well pads and transmission lines or whether that would be exclusionary.
16. Mr. Schmidt asked whether this would be too restrictive or not restrictive enough.
17. Mr. Robb thought that the dehydrators should stay on the same property as the gas wells.
18. Mr. Banks said that if the dehydrators were allowed the 300’ from the well pads that was being discussed, the dehydrators would be abutting residential property and it’s a hazardous process.
19. Mr. Schmidt said that somebody needs to reach out to someone to get more information on these hydrators. Perhaps Mr. Shoup would be able to do this.
20. Mr. Butala wants to do research on dehydrators.
21. Mr. Schmidt wonders whether we can require certain kinds of dehydrators such as zero emissions dehydrators.
22. Mr. Banks pointed out that processing natural gas or the dehydrators is dangerous.
23. Mr. Payne said that limiting the dehydrators to 3 zones, R, R-1, and I may be exclusionary.
24. Mr. Butala said that it looks like if you don’t dehydrate, the process becomes more cumbersome. He thought that 500’ could be less restrictive if there were zero emissions.
25. Again, Mr. Banks wants to look at all the screening category descriptions.
26. Mr. Payne asked if an 8’ evergreen is too expensive.
27. Mr. Banks says that it depends on the species. Alan will need to look at the screening requirements.
28. Mr. Payne will get everyone a word document of latest version of the ordinance.

29. Mr. Robb wants to look at the first 100 pages again after it is fully codified.

Workshop Meeting: Public Comments:

There were no public comments.

A motion was made by Mr. Schmidt to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Mr. Stark.

The March meeting will be on March 25th, 2021. It will be conducted via Zoom. The meeting link will be posted on the web site.