

WEST DEER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
January 26, 2023

The Meeting was called to order with the following members in attendance:
Alan Banks, Patrick Stark, Kathy Rojik, Robert Bechtold, and Rich Hollibaugh.

Absent Members: Mark Schmidt.

Other Attendees:

Dorothy Moyta, West Deer Township Zoning & Planning Dept.
Scott Shoup, Shoup Engineering
Gavin Robb, Township Solicitor
Daniel Mator, Township Supervisor
Robert Loper, Police Chief
David Lucci, Victor Wetzel Associates, LLC, Kingston, (Unionville)
Brett Schulz, Weaver Homes, Ridgewood Heights
Mike Ogin, Gateway Engineers, Ridgewood Heights
Josh Wiegand, Fire Chief, West Deer Volunteer Fire Co. #3

Outline and Order of Meeting

1. Approval of December Minutes
2. New West Deer Municipal Building: Land Development
3. Ridgewood Heights: Housing Development: Subdivision and Land Development.
4. Zoning Ordinance Revisions/ Updates
5. Zoning Map Revisions/ Updates
6. Comments/Questions from Public
7. Comments/Discussion by Planning Commission Members/Staff
8. Adjournment

Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Rich Hollibaugh and seconded by Kathy Rojik to approve the December 2022 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes as submitted. All were in favor and the motion carried.

West Deer Municipal Building: Land Development

Mr. Shoup presented the new West Deer Township Municipal Building – Land Development. Comments were as follows:

1. It may be possible to obtain grant money for the accessible sidewalk. Mr. Stark asked when would the Township be applying for grant money. Mr. Shoup said not until the building is done, possibly 2024.
2. Mr. Shoup said that the walking trail may also be able to be done with grant money. Mr. Banks suggested using millings from the road.
3. There is a wedge curb at the end of the parking lot along the walking trail at the police entrance/ side of the building. This could be used in an emergency by the police to access East Union Rd instead of going through the employee and public parking as would be their typical route to East Union Rd. at all other times.
4. Mr. Stark asked how the walking trail would be maintained in bad weather.
5. Mr. Shoup said that there are 69 parking spaces in the front and back of the proposed Municipal Building and 7 at the side of the proposed Municipal Building.
6. Mr. Shoup said that the future trail will link back to the existing salt storage building.
7. Mr. Shoup asked if the trail will link to the dog shelter and Mr. Shoup said yes.
8. Mr. Banks said that they should link the front of the new Municipal Building with striping to the existing Municipal building.
9. Mr. Stark wondered if leaving the proposed parking lot open for future access was helpful.
10. Mr. Hollibaugh wanted to hear what Chief Loper felt about the cross traffic with the police going in and out throughout the day and having to drive through the employee parking and public parking lots.
11. Chief Loper said that he was not concerned about having direct access to East Union Rd. as he does now. He is also not concerned about his officers crossing through the employee parking and public parking lots in order to access East Union Rd. during the day. He doesn't believe that employee or public pedestrians will be in danger of being struck by the officer's cars as they are using the lots throughout the day.
12. Mr. Banks was concerned about the types of shrubs in the front of the building for security reasons; studies have shown that the bushes could be areas where bombs can be hidden.
13. The architects have made adjustments to smaller shrubs in front of the building and eliminated any shrubs that were not deer resistant. Mr. Banks will give a specification for arbor vitae that are deer resistant and evergreen for hiding the trash receptacle.

14. Mr. Hollibaugh asked if they have taken Mr. Schmidt's comments under advisement as he is not present at the meeting. He wondered if they needed to vote at this meeting or wait for Mr. Schmidt's return at the February meeting.

First motion by Mr. Hollibaugh and second motion by Ms. Rojik to Recommend Approval, voting was unanimous, of the New West Deer Municipal Building – Land Development with the following conditions:

1. Develop a connection walkway (non-ADA) from the proposed northern trail to the dog shelter.
2. Include striping for a future crosswalk where the future sidewalk meets the main entrance drive off of East Union Road.
3. Install deer resistant arborvitae as screening for the dumpster enclosure.
4. Show the future access connecting in to the public works salt storage area.

Mr. Hollibaugh wanted to place emphasis and importance on 3 areas discussed:

1. The walking trail needs to be developed to connect areas together.
2. The cross traffic of police employees through municipal employee parking and public parking is still a concern.
3. Grants need to be gotten in a timely manner.

Ridgewood Heights: Housing Development: Subdivision and Land Development

Mr. Schulz from Weaver Homes presented the revised Ridgewood: Housing Development: Subdivision and Land Development. Mr. Schulz went over the comments from Scott Shoup's January 10, 2023 They will also address the January 17th comments letter.

1. It was decided that the variance granted to Kyle Properties for the parcel in March 2022 is not transferable as the lot configurations and number of lots is different. Mr. Schulz presented an application and check for a Zoning Variance and will present at the February 16, 2022 Zoning hearing Board.
2. An expanded pedestrian easement of 50' was suggested at the end of the walks at Cedar Ridge Rd.
3. Mr. Schulz said that the HOA documents are being emailed today.
4. Mr. Banks suggested that Weaver homes look at the Zoning ordinance for street trees.
5. Mr. Wiegand weighed in. He suggested that they need to add another fire hydrant as the cul-de-sac is over 750'. Josh asked what the grade is and Mr. Schulz said 12 %. Josh said OK as 12% was the maximum grade for them to set up the ladder truck. Mr. Wiegand also suggested a guardrail. Mr. Shoup said that PennDOT can weigh in on a guardrail when looking at the HOP.

First motion by Mr. Hollibaugh and second motion by Mr. Bechtold to **RECOMMEND APPROVAL**, voting was unanimous, of the Ridgewood Heights: Subdivision and Land Development with the following conditions:

1. Address and satisfy all issues in the letter from the Scott Shoup dated 1.17.2023.
2. Locate additional fire hydrant at end of cul-de-sac.
3. Approval of the Variance scheduled for 2.16.2023.

Zoning Ordinance/ Zoning Map Revisions/ Updates

Comments were as follows:

1. Mr. Robb said that they needed to review the PRD section.
2. Mr. Resciniti wanted to review the Gas and Oil Section, but Mr. Robb said that the Planning Commission already stands on what they approved.
3. Mr. Shoup said that the Board of Supervisors met and want to allow PRD's to happen in the R-1 Zoning District. Should it be approved for R-1; it already happens in R-2, R-3, and R-4. Lot size and density need to be looked at.
4. Mr. Shoup compared the Draft ordinance to the existing ordinance and said that there were no minimum lot sizes called out in the draft.
5. Mr. Robb said that density is not the answer in the PRD.
6. Mr. Stark wants to take more time to get Mr. Schmidt's input.
7. Regarding the Zoning map, Mr. Shoup said that the parcel on Russellton Dorseyville Rd. where Nova Flooring is located is non-conforming. Joe Rulli of Nova Flooring weighed in on how this may affect his future plans to expand.
8. There is a newer version of the Zoning Map and it will be brought to the February meeting.

First motion by Mr. Hollibaugh and second motion by Mr. Bechtold to **RECOMMEND Continuing** of the Zoning Ordinance/ Zoning Map Revisions/ Updates to the February meeting.

Comments/ Questions from the Public

1. Tim Resciniti of 1006 York Way wants to make sure that the setbacks and restrictions put forth in the updated Zoning Ordinance increase or at least remain in place.
2. Jack Rearick of 37 Corbriwood Lane also wants to make sure that the setbacks and restrictions put forth in the updated Zoning Ordinance increase or remain in place. He

also stated that the latest PA panel suggested setbacks up to 2500'. Also, he stated that he felt that the pollutants from the wells caused cancer and leukemia. The wells from Dionysus were predicted to have 1100 truck trips which will cause more pollution. He notes that our current ordinance doesn't meet the recommended setbacks for the latest recommendations group.

3. Victoria Austin of 19 Hemlock St. feels that there should be 1000' setback as recommended by the latest recommendations. Also, she feels that the wells create noise that is harmful to resident's health. In addition, property values will be reduced. She also feels that it is inconsistent to allow waivers for gas and oil wells when there are no waivers for other types of building allowed in the Zoning Ordinance.
4. Mary K. Kalivoda of 702 Crystal Springs Ct. asked for a 2500' setback for the wells. Mary K. also felt that allowing waivers was troubling.
5. Greg Pietrone of 25 Wagon Wheel Lane wants the Township to look at the noise issues related to the proposed gas drilling and make sure to protect the peace and quiet in the neighborhoods. He also wants to know what benefit these wells are to the residents. Also, he feels that the streets will be too congested with the trucks associated with the drilling operations passing through.
6. Ron Selinski of 188 Bryson Rd. resides 6/10 mile from the Well site. He moved to West Deer Township from Lawrenceville. He is concerned about air pollution from the trucks, light pollution, and the decrease in property values in homes near the wells.
7. Roth Stump of 7011 Middle Rd. is concerned about accidents near the wells and the setbacks not being enough to protect residents from these accidents. He spoke about an accident at a well site where a pipe slid 700' off the well pad. He is concerned about safety.

Comments/ Questions from the Planning Commission

The February Planning Commission meeting will be on February 23, 2023. The meeting time and agenda will be posted on the web site.