

Buckingham Township Planning Commission
Approved Meeting Minutes

The regular meeting of the Buckingham Township Planning Commission was held **Wednesday, April 1, 2009** in the Township Building, 4613 Hughesian Drive, Buckingham, Pennsylvania.

Present:	Andrea Mehling	Chairperson
	Patrick Fowles	Vice Chairperson
	Glynnis Stone-Tihansky	Member
	Ann Sutphin	Member
	Tom Baldwin	Member
	Marc Sandberg	Member
	Daniel Gray	Township Engineer
	Lynn Bush	Bucks County Planning Commission
Absent:	Rebecca Fink	Member

Ms. Mehling called the regular meeting to order at 7:38 p.m.

1. Consideration of Approving Corrections to January 7, 2009 PC Minutes.

Ms. Sutphin made a motion, seconded by Ms. Mehling to approve the corrections to the January 7, 2009 PC minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Consideration of Approving Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of March 4, 2009.

Mr. Fowles made a correction to page five, paragraph four. He asked that the word engineering be removed and replaced with "only consultants' letters."

Mr. Fowles made a motion, seconded by Mr. Baldwin to approve the Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of March 4, 2009 as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

3. SA 2001-05C "Smith Pfeiffer Tract" aka "Estates at Forest Grove" aka "Mill Creek Ridge", Dark Hollow Road and Forest Grove Roads, TMP# 6-23-1, 4, 13, 14 & 17, 183.1 Acres, AG-1 Zoning. Revised Final Plan of a Major Subdivision (71 lots) submitted 2/12/09. Review expiration date is April 7, 2009.

Representing the applicant was Mr. Steve Harris, attorney. Mr. Harris explained that he returned because last month the Planning Commission (PC) did not have the most recent Knight Engineering review letter or the most current plan revision. Mr. Harris noted that the expiration date on the agenda was incorrect as the correct expiration date was December 31, 2009.

The PC members made the following comments:

Ms. Tihansky expressed concerns about the site distances at Dark Hollow and Smith Roads. Ms. Tihansky felt that just because the condition was pre-existing, the developer should not be absolved of responsibility to remedy the problem. Mr. Harris asked if the PC would like to

approve the application with the contingency that the Dark Hollow Road entrance be closed. Ms. Tihansky responded that she would not.

Mr. Baldwin commented that the application did not show good planning and so he could not support it. Dr. Sandberg felt the plan did not fit with character of the surrounding community. Mr. Harris noted that the plan did have preliminary approval because it met the zoning requirements. Ms. Sutphin noted that there were still outstanding stormwater issues and that overall she felt it was not a good plan. Ms. Mehling commented that she had problems with the road improvement plans. She noted that the people using the roads would use more than the frontage in that development.

Mr. Fowles made a motion, seconded by Dr. Sandberg to recommend against approval of 2001-05C "Smith Pfeiffer Tract" aka "Estates at Forest Grove" aka "Mill Creek Ridge", Dark Hollow Road and Forest Grove Roads, TMP# 6-23-1, 4, 13, 14 & 17, 183.1 Acres, AG-1 Zoning. Mr. Fowles noted that he made the motion notwithstanding that the application did meet the zoning ordinance and also with recognition that he was one of the people who voted for preliminary approval. He noted that things had changed in the thinking of the PC as they were now involved with the comprehensive plan. He specified that he made the motion because he thought the development was wrong for Wycombe. He felt it would change the beautiful village area by introducing a suburban enclave.

Mr. Matt Hockley, Wycombe, asked about the digging that was taking place across from the dam. Mr. Gray responded that there was a parcel being considered for a single family home and it likely had something to do with that.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Harris noted that Toll Brothers would be filing a revised plan.

4. Sketch plan submitted by Jeremy & Holly Fergusson for a 4-Lot subdivision for 3055 Burnt House Hill Road.

Representing the applicant was Mr. Scott Mill, VanCleaf Engineering. Mr. and Mrs. Fergusson were also in attendance.

Mr. Mill summarized that the proposal included 23.8 acres at the intersection of Burnt House Hill Road and Church Road in the R-1 zoning district. Mr. Mill noted that the site was primarily in agriculture, there were wetland areas and there was a basin on site that collected drainage from a development above the site. He noted that the easement for the basin included about 1.5 acres. Mr. Hill reported that based on the site capacity calculations 12 dwelling units would be permitted but they were proposing only three additional dwelling units. The existing three structures include the main house, a cottage and an apartment in the barn. The proposal would be to maintain the three existing structures on one lot and create three additional lots. The smallest lot would be lot three at 4.78 acres (minimum required is 1.8 acres). Lots 1 and 2 would be 5.85 and 5.16 respectively and have a shared driveway to optimize site distance. Mr. Hill explained that they were proposing individual on-lot stormwater management. Mr. Hill reported

that preliminary testing by DelVal Soils, environmental consultants, indicated that the site appeared suitable for sandmound septic systems. Mr. Hill noted that the applicant would be asking for deferment of stormwater management until plot plan time. He explained that they would be designing for a hypothetical development and so the process would have to be done again when there were real plans. Mr. Hill noted that the applicant would also request waivers from improvements along the road (curbing and sidewalk) because it would be out of character with the surrounding community.

Ms. Sutphin asked if the three existing residences on one lot would be acceptable to the Township's zoning. Mr. Gray asked if the three structures were individual dwelling units and noted that if so they may present problems with zoning. Mr. Fergusson explained that they were two individual rental units. Mr. VanCleaf noted that they sized the lot as if there were three separate units.

Ms. Tihansky asked if the applicant had noticed that the retention basin fills more than it did in the past. Mr. Fergusson responded that they have not had any problems this year but acknowledged that the previous year there were some periods when there was standing water. Ms. Tihansky noted that the entire area was wet. Mr. Gray noted that per ordinance they must stay away from wetland areas. Mr. Gray asked who was responsible for maintenance of the basin. Mr. Fergusson responded that he was responsible. Mr. Gray noted that there was still a temporary riser which may have rusted. Mr. Gray noted that the basin would be investigated once the plan came in and if maintenance were required, the applicant would have to do it.

The PC asked Mr. Gray if he was comfortable with deferring the stormwater management design. Mr. Gray explained that typically Buckingham Township liked to see that an applicant could comply with the ordinances with a design (even if it was not the one ultimately used). Mr. Gray added that the Board needed some assurances that something reasonable could be done.

After discussion the PC consensus was that they were not comfortable completely waiving the design of the stormwater management, but they also did not want the applicant to have to do a complete stormwater management plan. Mr. Gray recommended tightening up the building envelope to show the location of the house, specifying the location of stormwater management, etc. Mr. Gray advised that they might not have to show the minor details of the plan, but recommended that they show they could comply with septic, stormwater, buffer requirements, etc. He recommended that the applicant consider whether they would allow maximum impervious surface ratio or if the lots would be deed restricted.

Mr. Gray felt that the Board of Supervisors would need to give direction about what extent of design they wanted to see.

Ms. Sutphin noted that by putting houses at the back of the lots, it could preclude things like swimming pools or tennis courts because they were not permitted to be located in front of homes. Mr. Gray commented that doing additional planning could help when selling so buyers would know exactly what could be done on the lot.

Ms. Mehling recommended putting all waiver requests in a letter.

Dr. Sandberg asked the minimum lot size for a preserved farm. Ms. Bush responded that for the County it was 50 acres unless adjacent to a farm, but that the Township had no limit. Dr. Sandberg asked if the applicant had considered farmland preservation as an option. The Fergussons responded that they had considered the option.

Mr. Jack Young complimented the Fergussons on the sketch plan. Mr. Young commented that his observation over a 30 year period was that the water in Watson Creek was down. Mr. Young asked if the development could have any impact on the water table and existing wells. Mr. Gray responded that the number of lots being proposed would come under a different classification than if it were a larger development. Mr. Gray did not suspect there would be any adverse impact unless someone were in a situation where one inch would make a difference.

Mr. Baldwin left the meeting at 8:20pm.

Mr. Fowles responded that it was an observation that has been heard many times and there was a concern throughout the Township about water in aquifers.

Mr. Gray noted that stormwater management ordinances required developers to put stormwater from 5 year storm events back into the ground to continue to recharge the base rather than just shoot it down the stream.

Mr. Sam Costanzo, VanCleeef Engineering, reiterated the request to waive some of the planning requirements as discussed earlier. Ms. Bush noted that the Township does endorse the concept of working with an applicant who is not maxing out their property.

Mr. Costanzo asked if the applicant should appear before the Board of Supervisors as a next step. Mr. Gray responded that they could if that was their preference.

There was no action taken on the sketch plan.

5. Continued review of Comprehensive Plan.

Removed from agenda

Ms. Sutphin made a motion, seconded by Dr. Sandberg to adjourn the meeting at 8:40p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Suzanne Safran