



Township of Northampton
55 Township Road
Richboro, PA 18954

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF
FEBRUARY 27, 2024
MINUTES**

Members Present

Steve Saddlemire
Mark Shapiro
Pat McGuigan
Dave Deola
Mike Bidwell
Janet Kifolo

Excused

Michael Enz

Others Present

Amanda Fuller, PE, Township Engineer
Michael T. Solomon, Director of Planning and Zoning

Mr. Saddlemire called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance. There was also a moment of silence for those in our armed forces.

Reorganization

The following members will serve in 2024:

- Steve Saddlemire – Chair
 - (Motion – McGuigan; Second – Kifolo - Approved 6-0)
- Mark Shapiro - Vice-Chair
 - (Motion – McGuigan; Second – Deola - Approved 6-0)
- Pat McGuigan – Secretary
 - (Motion – McGuigan; Second – Kifolo - Approved 6-0)

Minutes

A motion (Shapiro/McGuigan) was made to approve the minutes from the April 11, 2023 meeting.

Approved - 6-0

Consideration of Preliminary/Final Plan of Subdivision and Land Development, Trinity Realty Minor Subdivision, SLD 23-1, Bridgestone Drive

Sam Costanzo and Scott Mill from Van Cleef Engineering were present on behalf of the applicant and provided a synopsis of the project.

Located along the northern side of the Bridgestone Drive extension, approximately 1,000 feet west of its intersection with Bridgetown Pike, the proposal is to subdivide a 6.38 acre parcel into two lots of 3.27 (Lot 1) and 3.11 (Lot 2) acres and construct a two-story single-family detached dwelling on each lot. Bridgetown Drive will be extended with a cul-de-sac on Lot 2. Public water and sewer will serve the site.

The C-R – Country Residential District permits single-family detached dwellings on lots having a minimum lot area of 2 acres, a minimum lot width of 200 feet, and a maximum impervious surface ratio of 10 percent.

Mr. Costanzo gave an overview of Bridgestone Drive and noted that it is a private street that will be extended with a cul-de-sac. He noted that the improvements will allow access for emergency services vehicles, which has been reviewed.

Mr. Costanzo noted that there are environmental constraints on the property and that the project has been engineered to comply with ordinance requirements.

At this point, he noted that the applicant received several review letters and will comply with the Gilmore Associates comments raised in their latest correspondence.

Mr. Costanzo discussed the updated waiver letter that is dated February 27, 2024. Mr. Saddlemire requested that the applicant clarify the orientation of Bridgetown Pike as it relates to Bridgetown Drive on the aerial that was presented. Mr. Mill provided this information and also showed the individual lots that are owned by the same property owner.

Ms. Fuller stated that there have been two additional waivers with the updated letter that are related to stormwater management. Mr. Costanzo noted the street tree placement and clarified that the applicant will comply with these requirements.

In response to Mr. Saddlemire, the applicant clarified the widths of Bridgestone Drive that varies between 12 and 24 feet and explained the rationale. In response to Ms. Fuller, the applicant noted that they will also replace the culvert. Mr. Mill also explained the constraints with the improvements as it relates to existing telephone poles.

In response to Mr. Saddlemire, the applicant clarified that there will be a homeowners' association with the new homes. He also noted that there is an existing homeowners' association for several of the existing dwellings and that there are several properties that are not associated with it. This will be reviewed in further detail with the Township and the applicant's legal counsel.

The applicant also clarified that they will comply with the request as it relates to stormwater management and underground basins on the individual lots as opposed to rain gardens.

Mr. Saddlemire inquired and the applicant confirmed that there will be public water and sewer to the properties. Ms. Fuller noted that there will be additional fire hydrants as part of the proposed project as well.

Mr. Saddlemire raised concerns about the exit on the Bridgetown Pike and this issue was discussed in detail.

Ms. Fuller noted the updated waivers as they are identified in the correspondence that was provided this evening. Ms. Fuller also noted that there are no major concerns and that there is a path moving forward.

At this point, being no comment from the public, the Planning Commission made the following motion:

I move that we recommend to the Board of Supervisors Preliminary/Final approval of the Trinity Realty Minor Subdivision and Land Development, SLD 23-1, subject to compliance with the Township Engineer's review letter dated December 19, 2023, the Township Planner's review letter dated December 7, 2023, and the Township Traffic Engineer's review letter dated December 19, 2023. It is also recommended that the requested waivers be granted.

**Motion - Kifolo Second – Shapiro
Approved – 6-0**

Consideration of Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance Amendment

Mike Solomon provided an overview of the comprehensive zoning ordinance amendment with changes as follows:

1. To eliminate an obsolete definition;
2. To allow decks and patios to encroach a maximum of 25% into the rear yard setback. This is a resident-friendly provision that will eliminate the time and expense of variance requests while still maintaining a significant setback to protect neighboring properties;
3. To allow structures such as gazebos and pool houses to meet the same setback as detached garages thereby resulting in a more consistent and uniform application of the ordinance;
4. To allow the keeping of chickens in all zoning districts subject to specific criteria. Currently, our ordinance requires a minimum of five acres in limited districts within the Township, which is restrictive given the trend for people to raise their own chickens. As a result, this amendment will address this issue while also including significant safeguards within the ordinance that will protect neighboring properties, such as not allowing roosters; and,
5. Finally, criteria related to special events will be removed from the Zoning Ordinance into a separate section of the code to establish a more comprehensive process to administer these events.

As required by the Municipalities Planning Code, this ordinance is being forwarded to the Planning Commission for review and recommendation.

At this point, being no comment from the public, the Planning Commission made the following motion:

I move to recommend to the Board of Supervisors an amendment to the Northampton Township Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 27, for the purpose of amending sections related to definitions, accessory buildings and structures, permitting the keeping of chickens in all zoning districts subject to specific criteria, and deleting special event provisions.

**Motion - Deola Second – McGuigan
Approved – 6-0**

Other Business

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted:

Michael T. Solomon
Director of Planning and Zoning