

**COLLEGE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
In Person and Via Zoom**



September 5, 2023 7:00 p.m.
1481 East College Avenue, State College, PA 16801
www.collegetownship.org

PRESENT: Ray Forziat, Chair
Ed Darrah, Vice Chair
Peggy Ekdahl, Secretary
Matthew Fenton
Robert Hoffman
Bill Sharp
Ash Toumayants, Alternate

ABSENT: Noreen Khoury

STAFF PRESENT: Don Franson, P.E., P.L.S., Township Engineer
Lindsay Schoch, AICP, Principal Planner
Mark Gabrovsek, Zoning Officer
Sharon Meyers, Senior Support Specialist – Engineering/Planning

GUESTS: Deb Nardone – ClearWater Conservancy
Ryan Hamilton – ClearWater Conservancy
Garrett Gass – HRG, Inc.

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Forziat called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ZOOM MEETING PROTOCOL: Mr. Forziat verified there were people present via Zoom, Ms. Schoch reviewed Zoom protocol.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Forziat verified Ms. Khoury was absent and Mr. Toumayants would be late.

OPEN DISCUSSION: None presented.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Mr. Fenton moved to approve the August 15, 2023 meeting minutes as written. Mr. Darrah seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

PLANS:

P-1 Clearwater Conservancy Sketch Plan

Ms. Schoch introduced the sketch plan and mentioned Ms. Nardone, Mr. Hamilton, and Mr. Gass are sitting in the audience to present the plan. She gave a brief PowerPoint presentation of the sketch plan and supplemental documents provided by ClearWater Conservancy and opened the floor for questions. Mr. Darrah asked for clarification of the plan which Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Gass explained.

Mr. Hamilton further explained ClearWater Conservancy's proposed and properties they have purchased. He added that more recently ClearWater Conservancy has identified the area of the proposed subdivision as a potential conservation area. The area could be opened for the public to enjoy and would increase connectivity and flow throughout the conservancy properties. Mr. Gass added they plan to submit a sidewalk waiver as connectivity will be achieved using trails throughout the property, there is no new development proposed, and topography will make it problematic for sidewalk construction.

Overall the Planning Commission would like to see a Master Plan with phasing in order to visualize the overall project and possibly have a general timeline for projects. Anticipating the request for a sidewalk waiver, ClearWater provided two additional maps along with the proposed subdivision plan, which staff introduced in the brief PowerPoint presentation. A sidewalk waiver request is not required with the Sketch Plan submission, however, it will be considered and submitted along with the Preliminary/Final Subdivision Plan.

Ms. Nardone stated a long term vision may be brought before the Planning Commission when a formal submission is made. She added that the existing property that borders Spring Creek will remain undeveloped with walking trails throughout. The Conservancy also plans to fully restore the farmhouse and barn. The farmhouse is planned to be a community conservation center and the barn will house staff in the upper floor and storage for projects and community events in the lower floor.

After an abundance of discussion between the Planning Commission, ClearWater Conservancy, HRG, and staff it was determined that the Conservancy and HRG have the Planning Commissions comments and the commissioners look forward to seeing the subdivision plan.

OLD BUSINESS: None presented.

NEW BUSINESS: None presented

REPORTS:

R-1 DPZ CoDesign Update

Ms. Schoch stated that a meeting has been scheduled between DPZ and staff to discuss the proposed form based code provided by DPZ. Staff is currently reviewing the code and working towards more of a hybrid version. Mr. Forziat asked if DPZ will meet with the Planning Commission at the beginning of the process. Mr. Sharp stated that staff should review and refine the proposed changes prior to being presented to the Planning Commission as this is going to be a long and tedious process.

R-2 Council Meeting Update

The prior report led to the Council Update. Mr. Darrah opined that the Planning Commission's recommendation for the Shiloh Road Rezoning topic was not properly represented. Ms. Schoch stated that Council had a special meeting on August 29th and was provided the same worksheet that Planning Commission completed at their last meeting with the Planning Commission and staff's recommendations and rationale included. Council was able to review the staff recommendations and Planning Commission recommendations. However, Council ultimately decided they prefer the deliberative process conditional use will provide and determined use by right is not the direction they will follow. Mr. Darrah stated that duplexes can be front end loaded and continues to maintain that affordable housing will not be achieved through rear loading residences. He opined that the Township is being way too restrictive and there will be no affordable housing in that area due to that restriction.

Mr. Darrah asked why staff is stuck on all parking in the rear of buildings. Staff replied that they took the advice of the consultant. Mr. Darrah offered that the consultant is not familiar with the area and deals primarily with more urban environments and different economics than State College. Mr. Forziat stated that there has been a push by staff to Council suggesting that conditional use is the way to go. He added that the current Council has determined they would like flexibility in the ordinances to be able to negotiate and do what they want. However, the Planning Commission is considering the future of the Township and a time when there will be different Council members with different agendas and there needs to be controls. Mr. Darrah added that Planning Commission's recommendation for plans and ordinances can be turned down if Council doesn't like the recommendation. Ms. Schoch stated that the Planning Commission's recommendation and staff's recommendation were presented to Council. Staff continues to agree with the consultant which was hired by a committee of various members of Council and Planning Commission, as well as Centre Region representatives. Planning Commission determined that their recommendation was not voiced strongly at the Council Special Meeting. Mr. Forziat stated that the Planning Commission understands what transpired in the special meeting given the dialogue and needs to let Council complete the process as they wish and Planning Commission's recommendations don't matter.

STAFF INFORMATIVES:

SI-1 Council Meeting Minutes

No further discussion.

SI-2 Zoning Bulletin

No further discussion.

OTHER MATTERS:

OM-1 Centre Region Planning Commission August 3rd Report & Handouts

Mr. Forziat introduced the topic and discussed the summary report and supporting documents provided. There was a final draft of the sewer service area and regional growth boundary provided. It was determined that the regional growth boundary and sewer service area share the same boundary and if a developer requests a shift in one line, they could both shift.

There was an EV Readiness Guide and model ordinance developed and presented to the CRPC by an intern. Mr. Forziat stated this document is interesting and something the Planning Commission should become familiar. He added that there was also census results provided and the Planning Commission should be familiar with the demographics as plans and other documents are presented to the commission.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Forziat announced the next meeting will be Tuesday, September 19, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. and continues to encourage dialogue and communication at the meetings.

ADJOURNMENT: *Mr. Sharp moved to adjourn. Mr. Fenton seconded. Motion carried.*

Meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Sharon E. Meyers

Sharon E. Meyers
Senior Support Specialist – Engineering/Planning