

**East Fallowfield Township
Planning Commission meeting
Approved January 9, 2017 minutes
6:40 pm**

Attendees:

Dennis Crook, Chairman
John Schwab, Vice Chairman
John Nielsen
Stephanie Saxton
Joe Perzan (remotely by telephone)
Michael Domboski
Carol Kulp, Board of Supervisor Member

Not Present:

Jim Weeks
Sue Monaghan

Dennis Crook called the meeting to order at 6:40 pm.

Discussion on order of agenda items.

There was a discussion about the order of agenda items for the meeting. The Commission decided to proceed with the meeting in the order below.

Election of 2017 Planning Commission Chairman.

MOTION: John Schwab made a motion to appoint Dennis Crook as the 2017 Planning Commission Chairman. Joe Perzan seconded.

VOTE: 5-0

Election of 2017 Planning Commission Vice Chairman.

MOTION: Dennis Crook made a motion to appoint John Schwab as the 2017 Planning Commission Vice Chairman. John Nielsen seconded.

VOTE: 5-0

Election of 2017 Planning Commission Secretary.

There was a discussion about how the role of Planning Commission Secretary was handled in the past. John Schwab stated he had taken minutes in the past. In more recent years, it has been done by someone in the office. John Schwab stated the problem he found with having a Planning Commission member taking meeting minutes was that it is very difficult to stay engaged in the conversations. Dennis Crook stated the previous Township Secretary attended their meetings and did meeting minutes. When the Township Secretary's job description was changed, they removed attendance at Planning Commission meetings and therefore the current Township Secretary does not attend their meetings. John Schwab stated the proposed Planning Commission Bylaws states that the Township Administrative Secretary shall be appointed by the Board of Supervisors to keep the minutes and records of the Planning Commission. He asked if there is any possibility the Board would appoint one of the office staff members to be the Planning Commission Secretary and attend their meetings. Joe Perzan asked if the budget is the issue. Dennis Crook stated he thinks there is room in the budget for one of the administrative office

staff to be paid to attend Planning Commission meetings. Dennis Crook stated he feels it is more efficient for someone to attend the meetings and transcribe the minutes. John Schwab posed the question if anyone on the Planning Commission would be interested in this role. Stephanie Saxton stated she can do short-hand. Stephanie Saxton said she could help out with the process. She suggested setting up a process in which she take notes and passes the notes to Lisa Valaitis, the Township secretary. Dennis Crook stated this would help out with writing letters which can be time-sensitive. John Schwab suggested a motion be made appointing Stephanie Saxton as Planning Commission Secretary with the understanding she will work with the Township Secretary to complete meeting minutes. There was a discussion about asking the Board of Supervisors to have Lisa Valaitis attend their meetings.

MOTION: Dennis Crook made a motion to appoint Stephanie Saxton as the 2017 Planning Commission Secretary/Liaison. John Nielsen seconded.

VOTE: 5-0

Welcome Stephanie Saxton.

Dennis Crook welcomed Stephanie Saxton as the newest Planning Commission member. Dennis Crook also discussed an upcoming Master Planner course that he recommended all new members attend.

Michael Domboski – For Alternate Position.

Dennis Crook thanked Michael Domboski for applying for to be a Planning Commission member. He stated they are working on establishing alternate positions by having the Bylaws approved. After the Bylaws are approved, the Planning Commission will officially appoint Michael Domboski as an alternate. Dennis Crook stated he also had Lisa Valaitis prepare a record of attendance for both the regular Planning Commission meetings and workshops for the last two years. He also commented on Jim Weeks recent attendance record which was 50% for regular meetings. Joe Perzan stated he is honored to serve on the Planning Commission.

Motions for Board of Supervisors.

1. Planning Commission Bylaws.

Dennis Crook reported he worked with Lisa Valaitis to put together the Planning Commission Bylaws presented for discussion by merging several different sample bylaws from other municipalities. The Township Solicitor reviewed the draft.

The Planning Commission reviewed the Township Solicitor's review comments and discussed them as follows:

Solicitor Comment #1 – Article III – Membership: "Note that this provision is subject to approval by the Board of the draft Ordinance (to add the positions of alternate into the PC portion of the Township Code)." John Schwab stated this comment means that adding Planning Commission alternates will need to be approved to by the Board via Ordinance. The Solicitor also recommended the number of alternates stated in the Bylaws be changed from two (2) to three (3). The Planning Commission was in approval of this change.

Solicitor's Comment #2 – Article III – Membership: "This issue should be put before the Board of Supervisors for consideration." in regard to the Bylaw's statement that "New members are required to complete the County's Master Planner Program by the end of their first term." John Schwab stated that the entire document will be before the Board of Supervisors for their consideration.

Solicitor Comment #3 – Article III – Membership: "This issue should be put before the Board of Supervisors for consideration." in regard to the Bylaw's statement that "Such training shall be reimbursed or paid by the Township,

including registration fees.” John Schwab stated that the entire document will be before the Board of Supervisors for their consideration.

Dennis Crook’s Comment – Article III – Membership: The number of Planning Commission members is not more than seven and the document states “nine (7)” in error. The written number needs to be corrected to state “seven (7)”.

Solicitor’s Comment #4 – Article III – Membership: “This language is subject to consideration by the Board of Supervisors in the context of the pending draft Ordinance.” Regarding the section of that states “the Board of Supervisors may appoint by resolution at least one (1) but no more than three (3) residents of the Township to serve as alternate members of the Planning Commission.....” Joe Perzan discussed the scenario of having one Planning Commission member absent at a meeting and three alternates are present. He posed the question of how do they chose which alternate serves as a member. John Schwab said he saw this addressed in another document and it stated that the alternates will be chosen on an alternating basis with the most senior alternate chosen first. Joe Perzan was in approval of this language.

Solicitor’s Comment #5 – Article IV – Officers and Duties/Section 4: The phrase “or some other individual” was added, which states that “the Township Administrative Secretary or some other individual shall be appointed by the Board of Supervisors to keep the minutes and records of the Commission.....”. After discussing the recommendation, the Commission felt this comment was too ambiguous and should be either “Township staff” or a “Commission member”. John Schwab suggested taking the word “Secretary” out of the section. On the positive side, this makes it more flexible for the Commission. Joe Perzan voiced concern of there being a conflict of interest with having a Commission member taking notes and doing meeting minutes and also voting on decisions. The Commission decided to add the word “qualified” to the statement.

Discussion on Planning Commission Duties: There was a discussion about where the Planning Commission’s duties should be documented. Dennis Crook stated he wants the duties to be stated in the Codes along with the establishment of the Planning Commission.

Solicitor’s Comment #6 – Article V – Attendance Policy/Section 1: “To the extent that this provision is considered, it should be incorporated into the Township Code (perhaps in the pending amendment to the PC portion of the Code)” regarding the attendance requirements stated in the draft of the Bylaws. The Planning Commission felt that the Solicitor is fine with the attendance policy in the draft. However, this should also be stated in the Code. There was a general discussion about the pros and cons of stating an attendance policy. The Commission felt the attendance policy did not belong in the Township Code and it is sufficient that it is included in the Bylaws.

Solicitor’s Comment #7 – Article V – Attendance Policy/Section 2: The recommendation was to add the Chairman “shall” contact a member to discuss absences in the event of an extenuating circumstance or illness and report back to the Commission. The Commission members approved of this comment.

Solicitor’s Comment #8 – Article VI – Meetings/Section 1: The recommendation was not to include the specific details of when the meetings are held and to make a statement that the Commission meets monthly and the schedule of meetings will be determined on an annual basis. The Commission was in approval of this comment because it provides flexibility if the meeting times and dates ever need to be changed. There is also a cost savings because the Bylaws won’t have to be amended in order to change meeting times.

Solicitor’s Comment #9 – Article VI – Meetings/Section 2: The definition of quorum with the addition of “in attendance, subject to the treatment of abstentions or recusals in the Pennsylvania State Ethics Act”. The Planning Commission was in approval of this addition.

Solicitor’s Comment #10 – Article VI – Meetings/Section 3: The addition of “subject to the notice requirements of the Pennsylvania Open Meetings Law.” Dennis Crook stated that is the Sunshine Law. Joe Perzan discussed the disadvantage

of the requirement of providing five days-notice for a special meeting. The Planning Commission will recommend removing the five day regulation because the Commission is already following requirements of the Pennsylvania Open Meetings Law.

Solicitor's Comment #11 – Article VI – Meetings/Section 4: Recommendation was to take out “Sunshine” and add “Open Meetings Laws”. He also took out “for discussion purposes” and added “Those purposes as permitted under the Open Meetings Law.” The Commission was in agreement on this change.

Solicitor's Comment #12 – Article VI – Meetings/Section 5: Recommended the addition of a provision that a member voting remotely shall view all materials presented and can hear and communicate comments and the members participating remotely are not counted in determining whether a quorum is met. The Commission was not in favor of the remote member not being counted in determining a whether quorum is met. John Schwab suggested the following wording: “Members may participate and vote by telephone and video conferencing as approved by the Chairman provided that the individual participating can hear and communicate in order to meaningfully participate.” Mr. Schwab said he didn't like the requirement of the participant being able to view all materials presented. The Planning Commission agreed that the last sentence regarding remote participants not being counted towards quorum should be removed and all other changes were approved.

Discussion on Quorum: There was a discussion about the definition of quorum and how quorum is determined when the Commission has less than seven members.

Stephanie Saxton will provide the discussed changes to Lisa Valaitis.

MOTION: John Schwab made a motion that the Planning Commission present the draft Bylaws as revised in today's meeting to the Supervisors. John Nielsen seconded.

VOTE: 5-0

Dennis Crook will present the draft Bylaws as revised in today's meeting at the next Board of Supervisors meeting.

2. Alternate Planning Commission Members.

Dennis Crook stated Mike Crotty put the definition of alternate members in the draft Bylaws. There was a discussion about how many alternates to include in the Bylaws.

MOTION: John Schwab made a motion that the Planning Commission recommend to the Board of Supervisors that they appoint by resolution at least one but no more than three residents of the Township to serve as alternate members of the Planning Commission. Joe Perzan seconded.

VOTE: 5-0

Request from Board of Supervisors for Planning Commission to handle Park & Recreation – Ball Parks, Playing Fields, etc.

Dennis Crook reported at the last board of Supervisors meeting, the Supervisors requested that Dennis Crook ask the Planning Commission if they are interested in handling Park & Recreation business. He said there is currently no functioning Park & Recreation Committee. Dennis Crook presented a brief history of the Park & Recreation Committee. The Planning Commission members discussed this request. Dennis Crook also discussed the Master Plan and some of the different proposals have been discussed for the Park. Dennis Crook suggested Chester County 2020 hold a Community Conversation about the Park to determine what the majority of residents want done with the Park. There was also a discussion on why the Park & Recreation Committee has had so many resignations and addressing that problem. Stephanie Saxton presented the

change that has been occurring in sports leagues and how local townships are losing their leagues due to change in how sports leagues work. She recommended putting turf and lights up and finding renters to establish a consistent revenue stream. The Planning Commission made the decision not to take on the Park & Recreation Committee duties.

New Business.

1. Procedural Manual.

John Schwab presented a Procedural Manual from the Borough of West Chester that he thought would be helpful to the Planning Commission and the Township. He said he focused in on page 5 – Subdivision and Land Development Application. He stated this section covers the Commission’s process and responsibilities in relation to the Subdivision and Land Development process – sketch plan, preliminary plan and final plan applications. The manual also covers zoning codes, amendments and conditional use applications. Mr. Schwab stated it would complement the flow chart they are working on. Dennis Crook briefly discussed the flowchart they are working on for the new members of the Commission. He also spoke on the importance of including the Historical Commission in the flowchart process. Stephanie Saxton discussed web based programs for building flow charts. The Planning Commission members decided to review the Procedural Manual and will discuss it at the next meeting.

2. New Ideas.

Dennis Crook requested if any members have new ideas to please bring them up at meetings under new business.

3. Maps.

- **Official Township Map** - John Nielsen reported he did a small inventory of the various maps in the Township office. He said he thought they may want to update some of the current maps in the office. Dennis Crook stated the status of the official map is that it is in the budget. There are at least three bids for an official map submitted to the Township. The possibility of grants for this project was discussed.
- **Act 537 Sewage Maps** - Dennis Crook spoke about the Act 537 maps that reflect different levels of on-lot septic failures and malfunctions in the Township. Herbert MacCombie’s firm did these maps.

Adjournment.

MOTION: Dennis Crook made a motion to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 9:00 pm. John Schwab seconded.

VOTE: 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Valaitis
Township Secretary