

East Fallowfield Township
Planning Commission Workshop and Comprehensive Plan meeting
Approved October 5, 2015 minutes
6:37 pm

Attendees:

Dennis Crook, Chairman
John Schwab, Vice Chairman
Garth Monaghan
Joe Perzan
Jim Durborow
Jim Weeks

Not Present:

Richard Agatone

John Schwab called the meeting to order at 6:37 pm.

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

Approval of October 20, 2014 minutes:

MOTION: John Schwab made a motion to approve the October 20, 2014 Planning Commission Workshop and Comprehensive Plan minutes as presented. Joe Perzan seconded.

VOTE: 5-0

Approval of November 17, 2014 minutes:

MOTION: John Schwab made a motion to approve the November 17, 2014 Planning Commission Workshop and Comprehensive Plan minutes as presented. Jim Durborow seconded.

VOTE: 4-0 (Joe Perzan abstained)

Dennis Crook arrived at 6:42 pm.

Approval of June 1, 2015 minutes:

MOTION: John Schwab made a motion to approve the June 1, 2015 Planning Commission meeting minutes with a clarifying note that the paragraph on page 3 regarding consumption tax is not part of the approval process until it's clarified. Joe Perzan seconded.

VOTE: 4-0 Approved with change. (Jim Weeks and Garth Monaghan abstained)

Approval of June 15, 2015 minutes:

MOTION: John Schwab made a motion to approve the June 15, 2015 Planning Commission Workshop minutes as presented. Garth Monaghan seconded.

VOTE: 5-0 (Jim Durborow abstained)

Discussion on solar (wind turbines/windmills) issues in regard to problems, safety, as a utility, historic properties, HOA's, federal laws, mounting on telephone poles, and other related issues: Jim Durborow stated that anyone in the Township that wants to install solar panels should get stamped/approved engineering plans before installation. Jim Weeks agreed. Jim Weeks asked how the Township could ensure neighbors aren't impacted by solar panels. There was a discussion about making sure the neighbors aren't impacted. There was a discussion about creating an ordinance to address this. Jim Durborow suggested having permit applications come before the Planning Commission before the permit is issued. Garth Monaghan stated we need guidelines to follow. Dennis Crook suggested we find out how other municipalities are handling this issue. Joe Perzan stated that the more specifically the Township regulates these items, the more liability the Township assumes. There was a discussion about Homeowner's Associations not being allowed to deny solar panel installation. The Planning Commission decided their course of action will be to gather more information. The Commission will also get information from other local municipalities. The Planning Commission will inform the Board of Supervisors that they think this is a potential issue and that they will come back to the Board with more details in the near future. They will do more research and consult Vince Pompo. There was a discussion about the solar panel company's program and how it works.

Congratulations! The Comprehensive Plan has been accepted and recommended by the Board of Supervisors by all four attending Supervisors. Discuss implementation process: Dennis Crook spoke about implementing recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan. How do we bring up recommendations and issues to the Board for implementation? He said they want to present issues to the Board for recommendation like the solar panel issue. The Commission briefly discussed the need for each member of the Planning Commission to have a hard copy of the final Comprehensive Plan. Garth Monaghan volunteered to call Ray Ott about obtaining hard copies. Garth Monaghan stated the number of hard copies was specified in the contract. Dennis Crook stated for the implementation process he is looking to do a workshop with community participation to get more specific ideas. Mr. Crook spoke about also doing community surveys to get feedback on what residents want. They discussed how this would work such as putting out a survey with 10-15 questions about which Comprehensive Plan recommendations the community wants. Dennis Crook said he was thinking they should focus on one item at a time. Dennis Crook talked about the proper way of wording questions for a survey. They will discuss the recommendations and potential survey questions and bring the proposed questions to the Board of Supervisors for approval. Dennis Crook spoke briefly about West Bradford's grants and the importance of a township manager for obtaining grants. They also discussed township tax and township manager. Dennis Crook spoke about Act 167 Stormwater Management Ordinance and the cost to the Township to implement and enforce it. The township manager recommendation in the Comprehensive Plan will be one of the first recommendations to address. Jim Durborow suggested checking with the Chester County Planning Commission on whether they have a policy or recommendation that municipalities have a township manager. Jim Weeks will look into this. Joe Perzan stated hiring a township manager would address many other smaller issues.

Discussion on flow chart for development: Dennis Crook stated a township manager would help resolve this issue.

Road spraying and environmental issues: Dennis Crook stated he discussed this at the last Board of Supervisors meeting. He said they have been spraying on roadsides and it's killing everything that is sprayed. Mr. Crook stated they are spraying it along guardrails and over the creek. Garth Monaghan recommended talking to Tag Gathercole about this issue.

Penn State Extension Water and Sewer Workshop: Dennis Crook reported attendance was good. Both sessions were full with 60 total that attended. They discussed the postcard mailing that went to residents advertising the workshop. Dennis Crook reported he put a note on the postcard to check the East Fallowfield Township Facebook page for an opinion survey in the future. There were 51 water samples brought in for testing. The results were as follows: 30 water samples failed for ph rate, 7 water samples failed for total dissolved solids, 10 water samples failed for nitrates, 26 water samples failed for coliform bacteria, and 1 water sample failed for E.coli. Jim Durborow asked if these results would qualify the Township for a grant to conduct a much larger study. Dennis Crook stated he is waiting on the results of water testing specifically from East Fallowfield Township. Dennis Crook said out of the 51 water samples, 26 were from East Fallowfield Township. Dennis Crook stated he is trying to obtain the locations of these failed water samples.

Jim Durborow asked what the next step is. Garth Monaghan stated the next step is to take your water sample to a private lab to confirm the test results from the workshop. Jim Durborow asked if there are any grants in existence that we could recommend to the Board of Supervisors to help assist residents with costs. Dennis Crook spoke about a program under the Single Family Housing Repair Loans and Grants. The program is known as Section 504 Home Repair Program and will provide loans to very low income homeowners to repair, improve or modernize their homes and grants to elderly very low income homeowners to remove health and safety hazards. Garth Monaghan stated the purpose of the study was to determine if the Planning Commission should recommend public water in additional areas. Jim Weeks said that many times, water quality doesn't have much to do with the area and can vary from property to property. There was a discussion about the different types of water failure problems. Dennis Crook stated he would like to see which areas it specifically shows. He said public education is the main goal of the workshop. People can treat water issues if they have any. Garth Monaghan talked about the Health Department's presentation which pointed out failures but did not distinguish what type of failures they were. Dennis Crook talked about Chester County's New Guideline for Septic Maintenance and how it is being pushed. He said West Bradford Township just passed it. There was a discussion about pumping out septic systems and how that doesn't ensure a septic system is operating correctly. Garth Monaghan suggested offering more voluntary water testing to residents. There was a discussion about possibly posting the workshop water testing results on the Township website. Dennis Crook spoke in favor of doing this workshop on an ongoing basis because new residents move into the Township. They discussed offering this workshop annually. They also discussed offering water testing at Park Day. There was a discussion about limestone causing dissolved solids in water. Dennis Crook also said the salt put on the roads in the winter is impacting water quality.

To summarize: The Penn State Extension Water and Septic Workshop was well attended and professionally done. The option is out there if more residents would like to pursue water testing.

Use and Occupancy Permit: Jim Durborow asked who oversees the process of someone getting a permit and doing the work. Who inspects the plumbing and electric work? Dennis Crook said the office staff takes in the applications and they are reviewed by Rob McLarnon, the Building Code Official. Permits go to Chris Della Penna if required. Stormwater regulation issues go to the engineer. Dennis Crook said electrical permits have a separate inspector. They discussed the permit information that is on the Township website. Jim Weeks said at the next meeting, he would like to discuss whether the Township should have a use and occupancy permit policy. In most municipalities, when a home is sold, the inspector is required to do a home safety inspection. Jim Weeks said it could be a small source of revenue for the Township.

Next Planning Commission meeting: November 2, 2015.

Joe Perzan made a motion to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 8:15 pm. John Schwab seconded. Vote: 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Valaitis
Township Secretary