

**East Fallowfield Township
Planning Commission Meeting
Approved May 6, 2019 minutes
6:47 p.m.**

Attendees:

Dennis Crook, Chairman
John Nielsen, Vice Chairman
Michael Domboski
Joe Perzan
John Schwab
Alfred Wright

Not Present:

Sue Monaghan

Dennis Crook called the meeting to order at 6:47 p.m.

Discussion on Order of Agenda Items.

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

Approval of July 2, 2018 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: Dennis Crook made a motion to approve the July 2, 2018 Planning Commission meeting minutes. John Nielsen seconded.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

1. Dennis Crook stated there is a correction needed on page 3, item 2, line b – Official Map – change from Joe Perzan to John Nielsen.

VOTE: 4-0 (Minutes approved with change.) (John Schwab and Alfred Wright abstained.)

Rental Inspections - Inventory.

There was a discussion about how to obtain a list of rental properties in East Fallowfield Township. Dennis Crook said that they should consult with the Police Department, Fire Departments, and Public Works Department for assistance in identifying rental properties in the Township. Once rental properties have been identified, the Township could invite landlords to have a conversation with the Township about participating in a rental unit registration and inspection program to generate interest in the program. They discussed advertising a public meeting for both landlords and renters. Joe Perzan said the Planning Commission originally had a rental property draft ordinance that covered a lot of detail. Mr. Perzan suggested focusing on five important safety issues in the ordinance. Dennis Crook discussed some recommendations presented in the recent rental property course he took. The course instructor recommended starting small and getting the community involved before approving a detailed rental property ordinance. There was a discussion about what safety issues to focus on and what the scope of inspections should be for rental units. Dennis Crook said that the Township Code Officer Rob McLarnon recommended an annual renewal of rental permits and an inspection requirement of every two years. They also discussed the UCC Maintenance Code which lists specific items to check during a rental inspection. The Planning Commission decided to put aside the rental property draft ordinance and focus on developing a rental property registration system, identifying rental properties and their owners, educating identified rental property owners, and obtaining feedback from Township Manager Scott Swichar, Township Code Officer Rob McLarnon and the Board of Supervisors. The next step would be to invite landlords and tenants to a meeting to obtain their feedback. Joe Perzan said that they should emphasize safety issues with rental property landlords. There was a discussion about the need to define "rental property" and the different types of rentals. There was a brief discussion about Airbnb. There was a discussion about rental property registration fees and rental inspection fees. Alfred Wright presented an example rental property registration form from Valley Township. They discussed getting

feedback from Township Manager Swichar. They will invite Township Manager Swichar to the next Planning Commission meeting to discuss rental properties and other current topics. Dennis Crook will write a letter to request Township Manager Swichar attend a future Planning Commission meeting.

Dennis Crook discussed the Planning Commission's process for writing letters. Mr. Crook also commented on the Township's strengths and weaknesses. Dennis Crook stated one of the strong points of the Township is the meeting minutes which are very thorough. He said the Township is most lacking in communication between the Township committees. Alfred Wright stated that many townships have Board of Supervisor liaisons for their committees. Dennis Crook said until this year, East Fallowfield Township did appoint a Board of Supervisor liaison for each committee. Dennis Crook discussed the Township Manager Ordinance and the job description included in that Ordinance. John Nielsen asked Dennis Crook if the Board of Supervisors have ever approached him about having the Planning Commission review an ordinance. Dennis Crook replied no, except for the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. John Nielsen discussed the new Strategic Planning Steering Committee. Joe Perzan asked who should be initiating requests to review ordinances. Mr. Perzan asked if the Board of Supervisors or Township Manager should ask the Planning Commission to look at ordinances? Or should the Planning Commission be initiating the review of ordinances?

Chester County 2020 Community Conversation.

Dennis Crook reported that Will Stevens is scheduling a Chester County 2020 Community Conversation on the topic of Multi-Use Zoning. Dennis Crook presented the topics to be discussed at this event. This breakfast event will be held on Thursday, May 30, 2019 at the Chester County Emergency Training Center.

Taking Meeting Minutes.

Dennis Crook stated the Planning Commission attempted to do the required annual report however, they were not able to complete the report because the Planning Commission meeting minutes are behind. Mr. Crook stated he has brought this issue up to the Board of Supervisors several times and they suggested having a Planning Commission member do the meeting minutes. Dennis Crook stated that he researched transcribing services as a possible solution to getting the meeting minutes caught up. The Planning Commission could send the meeting recordings to a transcription company and have the meetings transcribed. The prices range between \$0.10 per minute to \$1.00 per minute. Dennis Crook reported that the Planning Commission has a budget of \$12,000 and can cover the transcription cost. Alfred Wright stated that the transcribed document would still need to be reviewed to consolidate the document into the meeting minutes format. John Nielsen reported he spoke to Township Manager Swichar about addressing the meeting minutes being behind. Township Manager Swichar is looking into hiring a West Chester University intern and adjusting the Township Secretary's workload to help get the meeting minutes caught up. John Nielsen reported that Planning Commission member Sue Monaghan is willing to prepare meeting minutes but would use the bullet point format with documentation of motions and voting results. They discussed the difficulty of completed meeting minutes by listening to a recording of the meeting. It would be much easier and quicker for the Township Secretary to put meeting minutes together from a written transcription as opposed to listening to a recording of the meeting. There was a conversation about how essential it is to have adequate and up to date Planning Commission meeting minutes. Dennis Crook discussed the option of having the meetings video recorded. A discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of having meetings video recorded. The Planning Commission will discuss with Township Manager Swichar the option to have their meetings transcribed and having the Township Secretary prepare meeting minutes from the transcription. The Planning Commission members decided to try the "speech to text" process for the next Planning Commission meeting.

Joe Perzan left the Planning Commission meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Office-Industrial and Multi-Use Zoning District - Uses by Right.

Dennis Crook reported that the Township Solicitor did not have any revised ordinances to present at the meeting. Therefore, the Planning Commission tabled this discussion until their next meeting.

Reassessment of ArcelorMittal Properties.

John Nielsen said he feels that some of the ArcelorMittal properties in Newlinville and the Office-Industrial Zoning District are underassessed. He plans to review the current assessments and investigate further with the Chester County Assessment Office. He

said that ArcelorMittal owns a 150-acre property in East Fallowfield Township. ArcelorMittal broke off part of that property to rent to Allan Myers which is an asphalt business. Mr. Nielsen stated there is no separate tax parcel identification number for the part of the property on which Allan Myers is located. There was a discussion regarding the best method to move forward with reassessing these properties. Dennis Crook stated a lot of the properties in the Multi-Use Zoning District are also under assessed. Michael Domboski suggested investigating having all the properties in question reassessed. There was also a discussion about how much increased revenue would result from a reassessment of these properties and whether it would be worth reassessing the properties. Alfred Wright suggested bringing the underassessed properties to the attention of the office administration and Board of Supervisors. Dennis Crook reported the current land assessment for the ArcelorMittal property is \$497,340. The property assessment of the buildings is \$140,270. The total property assessment is \$637,610. They discussed whether the current property assessment is accurate. Alfred Wright stated understanding the assessment process would be helpful in determining if this is worth pursuing. John Nielsen said that it is more desirable to have retail and commercial uses, as opposed to industrial uses, on the properties with frontage along Route 82. John Nielsen will further investigate with the Chester County Assessment Office.

Old Business.

1. **On-Lot Septic Management Program/Act 537 Plan** - Dennis Crook asked if the Township ever moved forward with implementing a Septic Management Program which was discussed as part of the Act 537 Plan. Mr. Crook explained that a Septic Management Program is an alternative to extending public sewer to parts of the Township that have on-lot septic systems. There was a discussion about small lots that are at risk of failing septic systems. They discussed current acreage requirements and alternatives to address failed septic systems. Alfred Wright will research sample ordinances of other municipalities and Chester County.

New Business.

1. **Taxation Manual** - Dennis Crook discussed the State Taxation Manual which lists what municipalities are permitted to tax.
2. **Trash & Recycling Collection** - Dennis Crook discussed the new trash and recycling company. He said he saw the trash company emptying both trash and recycling cans into the same trash truck along Route 82. The other Planning Commission members said they have seen two separate trucks, one for trash collection and one for recycling collection. Dennis Crook said the Township is billed by tonnage for both trash and recycling disposal.

Adjournment.

MOTION: Dennis Crook made a motion for the May 6, 2019 Planning Commission meeting to adjourn at 9:15 p.m. John Nielsen seconded.

VOTE: 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Valaitis
Township Secretary