

WORCESTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
WORCESTER TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY HALL
1031 VALLEY FORGE ROAD
WORCESTER, PA
Thursday, April 23, 2015 7:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Mr. Gordon Todd at 7:30 P.M.

ATTENDANCE

PRESENT:

Mr. Gordon Todd	Chairman
Ms. Pat Quigley	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Douglas A. Rotondo	Secretary
Ms. Chris David	Member
Mr. Anthony R. Sherr	Member
Mr. Brandon Rudd	Township Planning Consultant, Montgomery County Planning Commission

ABSENT:

Ms. Tiffany M. Loomis	Director of Planning & Zoning
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GUESTS:

Mr. Michael A. Richardson	Land Development Manager, Toll Brothers, Inc.
Mr. Thomas Imperato, Esq.	Representative for Toll Brothers, Inc.

1. PRESERVE @ WORCESTER:

- EXCESS TOPSOIL REQUEST – STOCKPILE ASBUILTS

Mr. Michael A. Richardson explained (as per his April 10, 2015 letter to Township Manager F. Lee Mangan) that there is an excess of excavated topsoil, measuring approximately 11,000 cubic yards, from the site work and construction being conducted at the Toll Brothers development off of Skippack Pike and North Wales Road. According to Chapter 81, Section 4 of the Worcester Township Code (Grading and Excavations), topsoil excavated from a particular parcel within the township may not be removed or transported from that parcel. As an alternative, Toll Brothers is suggesting that the surplus soil be used to raise the final grades of Common Greens #1, 5, and 6 by one foot consistently and is also proposing the construction of two landscaped berms within the designated Open Space areas E and F.

Ms. Quigley said that she has reservations about the raising of grades on the Common Greens. She noted that these open space areas were carefully planned to create a certain aesthetic quality that would enhance the look and feel of the development, for both residents and passers-by. It would defeat the entire purpose of having spent years in planning review if the grades were raised. The terrain in that particular part of the township has very gradual and subtle changes in elevation, with wide viewsheds, and she believes it should remain that way.

Mr. Richardson commented that if Toll Brothers had been the original developer to initiate the planning of the project, then they would have been able to address this issue better. *Note: Sal Paone Builders was responsible for the genesis of the project in 2004, but sold the property to Toll Brothers, Inc. after receiving final approval from the Board of Supervisors in 2013.*

Ms. Quigley questioned whether the ordinance prohibited topsoil from being removed from a property or out of the township limits.

Mr. Rudd confirmed that the current ordinance states that topsoil cannot be removed from individual properties.

The Planning Commission agreed that the ordinance, while well-intentioned, has caused an unintended negative consequence in this particular situation.

Ms. Quigley made a motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the excess topsoil on this property be allowed to be relocated somewhere else. Mr. Sherr seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

2. **CENTER SQUARE GOLF COURSE:**

- **CONDITIONAL USE APPLICATION**

The Planning Commission is in agreement that the Cutler Group's Conditional Use Application for a proposed 475 unit residential subdivision, including a "Life Care Facility," should be denied by the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Todd gave the following reasons as to why the CU Application should be denied:

- The applicant has not complied with the definition of a Life Care Facility, according to Section 150-9.
- The sketch plan provided indicates that single family units shown as independent living villas and independent living carriage homes appear to be on a subdivision of 334 non-conforming lots and would not meet the dimensional standards of this section, 150-11(D)(7). It also would create substantial non-conformity.
- The applicant has not satisfied the burden of proving compliance with Section 150-215 standards A through F of the Township Zoning Code. No credible evidence was presented either on the sketch plan or during the testimony at multiple public hearings providing compliance with any of the standards A through F with the possible exception of a part of standard D relating to traffic.

The Planning Commission also referenced the Montgomery County Planning Commission's review letter dated October 6, 2014, which recommends denial of the CU Application by the Board of Supervisors. In addition, they referenced Mr. Todd's letter to the Board of Supervisors, dated November 19, 2014. This explains the points above and the fact that the Planning Commission would not make a recommendation on the CU Application, due to a lack of information on the sketch plan and application.

Mr. Sherr made a motion, based on the above information, to recommend that the Board of Supervisors deny the applicant's CU application. Ms. Quigley seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

3. **VILLAGE PLANNING**

- CENTER POINT VILLAGE ZONING

Mr. Rudd reported on the progress of the drafting of the proposed Center Point Village Master Plan. He said that he continues to be in consultation with private planner Mr. John Kennedy, as well as with staff from Worcester Township and the Montgomery County Planning Commission. A stand-alone public hearing may be scheduled for this coming June.

4. **PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA FOR MAY 4, 2015 JOINT MEETING WITH THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Since there is nothing of any importance to discuss with the Board of Supervisors at this upcoming meeting, the Planning Commission will not be present.

5. **PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA FOR MAY 28, 2015 MEETING**

- HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE
- CENTER POINT VILLAGE PLANNING

6. **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**

A motion by Ms. David, seconded by Mr. Rotondo, for the approval of the minutes for the meeting held on March 26th, 2015 as amended, was passed unanimously.

7. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. John Kratz, Whitehall Road resident, asked if there was any plan to strengthen or repeal the ordinance section dealing with Life Care Facilities to prevent residents from incurring another lengthy and costly ordeal in the future (similar to the current Center Square Golf Course CU Application process).

Mr. Todd said he would be in favor of revising or repealing this section of the ordinance.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before this committee, the meeting of the Worcester Township Planning Commission was adjourned by Mr. Gordon Todd at 8:13 P.M.