

Honey Brook Township  
Planning Commission Agenda  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
November 12, 2015  
7:00 p.m.

The Honey Brook Township Planning Commission held its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, November 12, 2015, at the Honey Brook Township Building. The meeting was called to order at 7:13 p.m. by Chairperson Susan Lacy. Commissioners present were Gary McEwen, Leslie Siebert, Bob Witters, Terry Schmidt, Troy Stacey and Melissa Needles. The township engineer, Jennifer McConnell, of Technicon, Inc., was also present.

Absent: None

Guests: None

**Minutes:**

With no additions or corrections, a motion to approve the October 22, 2015, Planning Commission meeting minutes was made by Gary McEwen, seconded by Bob Witters. All in favor. None opposed. The motion carried.

Bob Witters made a comment that one of the supervisors announced at the Board of Supervisors (BOS) meeting that the "PC had approved the variance," and was corrected by Dick Reeder of the Zoning Hearing Board. The variance was *recommended with conditions* at the last Planning Commission meeting. Jennifer McConnell indicated that she would confirm the wording to ensure clarity of Planning Commission actions.

**Subdivision/Land Development Applications**

None

**Zoning Hearing Board/Conditional Use Applications**

None

**Pending Ordinances**

*Draft Landscape Ordinance discussion - update of the draft ordinance provided by TEI*

Jennifer McConnell presented the updated version §22-629 Landscaping with attachments and appendices in this month's packet. Comments made included:

Jennifer McConnell explained that the purpose of the landscaping changes is to require a sustainable amount of landscaping that will provide buffers, shielding, and environmental benefits on a site by site basis. The Planning Commission has seen broad differences in the amount of landscaping being proposed across the sites. For example, Hoover/Honey Brook Hardware, on 322 west of the borough - had proposed an alternative landscaping plan. They have put in all their plantings. She recommended going out to see the site. Most were in agreement that the Hoover site was done well. Poplar Realty was another example given and Jennifer McConnell stated that this plan was a conservation design which allowed smaller lots and a required amount of open space. The applicants proposed nearly all of the landscaping required by ordinance and the multitude of stormwater basins also drove up the required landscaping. The township will maintain ownership of the roads.

The revisions to Section 22-629 of the SALDO were discussed:

- Gary McEwen commented that in Section 6. Landscape Design Standards (E) re: spacing of trees no closer than 10' to utility lines will be difficult. Jennifer McConnell will double check with other similar townships on this item.
- Gary McEwen asked about Section 7(B) on riparian replacement trees - whether it is necessary to survey every tree - or can one take a representative sample of a forested area and inventory -and say that is a fair representation of the entire area. Susan Lacy responded that professionals take "plot samples" and can then extrapolate to the entire site for a representative mix of that area. Jennifer McConnell will add the term "plot samples."

Comments on the Suggested Plant List included:

- Susan Lacy suggested that height limitations be provided for street trees, specifically for urban areas that may affect utility lines.
- Susan Lacy also brought up the manner in which utility companies trim trees in their ROW, sometimes leaving trees in an unhealthy or unsafe state by cutting only what is within the ROW (ie leaving half a tree). Melissa Needles added that the utility owns the Right-of-Way for the tree line, e.g. PECO, where she previously worked. Melissa indicated that the utility companies will have meetings with municipalities before beginning tree cutting. The PC asked Jennifer McConnell to discuss with the solicitor whether we can add specific language about how utilities cut trees within their ROWs and to inquire with the Township about having pre-cutting meetings.

Comments on the DCNR invasive Plants list: none

One page document from Zoning §27-202 listing Higher Value Species:

- White Ash is to be removed due to the Emerald Ash borer infestation.
- Susan Lacy requested Yellow (Tulip) Poplar to be added to the list. Jennifer McConnell will add it.

Woodland and Hedgerow Conservation Standards §27-1306: Jennifer McConnell indicated that the changes are the text in red.

- Susan Lacy asked about #8. Timber Harvesting Operations, Jennifer McConnell clarified that the CCCD reviews for E & S before the township will issue a permit. This refers to selective logging, not clear cutting.
- Susan Lacy added in reference to Section 8 (B), that Penn State School of Forest Resources, is now the University Department of Eco-System Science and Management.
- Susan Lacy referenced in Section D(7) that the term 'harm to the environment' is "vague" and too broad; she suggested to change to 'adjacent property.' Jennifer McConnell will modify this.

- Susan Lacy noted in Section B (10): “afforest” canopy, should be a forest canopy. This was due to Word conversion, Jennifer McConnell will make the correction.

In summary, Jennifer McConnell advised members to bring any further comments to her by the beginning of December, for review at the December meeting.

**Correspondence of Interest:**

None

**Other Business**

Jennifer McConnell provided and referenced the 2016 Township Meeting & Document Submission Schedule. She noted that dates for the regular meetings in November and December needed to be selected due to the holidays. She noted that this year the workshop and regular meeting dates were combined for these months. Members were in agreement with this. She also noted that there may need to be changes to the PC schedule due to BOS workshop meetings but those dates have not yet been finalized.

A motion to approve the Planning Commission regular meeting and work session dates as outlined on the schedule with the changes to November 10 and December 8, was made by Troy Stacey, seconded by Gary McEwen. All in favor. None opposed. The motion carried.

Jennifer McConnell indicated that the township received a Vision Partnership Program Grant for Zoning Ordinance updates, to address changes from the Comprehensive Plan. There were nine applicants, and three were funded. A Task Force is being appointed by the Supervisors for this purpose. After some discussion, members requested that the process begin in January, with the first meeting being with a Brandywine Conservancy representative to explain the process as noted on the tentative schedule. Members also requested a final copy of the Comp Plan. Jennifer McConnell will ask for these. It was also noted that one BOS member will be part of the task force but has not yet been designated.

A motion to move forward with the Honey Brook Township Zoning Ordinance Task Force beginning in January, 2016, was made by Bob Witters, seconded by Melissa Needles. All in favor. None opposed. The motion carried.

**Upcoming Meetings** - All dates subject to change

November 23rd - Zoning Hearing Board (7:30 pm)

December 3rd - Board of Supervisors Workshop (7:00 pm)

December 9th - Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting (7:00 pm)

December 10th - Planning Commission workshop (if needed) immediately followed by Regular Meeting (7:00 pm)

**Adjournment**

With no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Troy Stacey, seconded by Gary McEwen. All in favor. None opposed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 pm.

The next Planning Commission meeting will be December 10, 2015.

Respectfully Submitted,

Leslie Siebert  
Secretary, Planning Commission