

**LOWER PROVIDENCE TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
OCTOBER 26, 2016 MEETING MINUTES**

**1) Call to Order**

A) Chairwoman O'Donnell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2) Roll Call:**

A) The following board members were in attendance: Ms. Kristina O'Donnell, Mr. David Atkins, Mr. Harold Baird, Mr. Michael Comroe, Mr. Mark Kuberski, Ms. Ginny Kricun, and Ms. Susan LaPenta

B) Also in attendance: Mr. Mike Mrozinski, Director of Community Development; Mr. Lonnie Manai, Township Engineer; Mr. Peter Nelson, Township Solicitor; Maggie Dobbs, MCPC Planner; Ms. Geri Golas, Assistant Township Manager; Ms. Jill Zimmerman, Board of Supervisor Liaison; Mr. Colleen Eckman, Board of Supervisor Liaison.

**3) Meeting Minutes:**

A) Approval of Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of August 24, 2016.

i) **MOTION:** Mr. Comroe made a motion to move the August 24, 2016 minutes into the record. Ms. Kricun seconded the motion. The motion *passed* 7-0.

**4) New Business:**

A) Presentation of sketch/master plan – St. James Episcopal Church – 3768 Germantown Pike, Collegeville.

i) Mr. Mrozinski outlined the scope of the project and what review has been done to date.

ii) Rev. Michael Sowards, Rector of St. James Episcopal Church, discussed the growth of the church, its strategic plan for community outreach and to manage the church's growth. He introduced the Rt. Rev. Daniel G.P. Gutierrez, Bishop of the Dioceses of Pennsylvania, who spoke in support of the project.

iii) Michael O'Rourke, GKO Architects, reviewed the existing structures and proposed plans.

iv) Ken Farrall, CMC Engineering, reviewed the engineering drawings for the project. He said that they will comply with most of issues in the review letters with the exception of the traffic study for which they will seek waivers in regard to driveway widening and turning lanes. He noted the reason for seeking the waivers is because it is an existing facility with limited impact.

(1) Mr. Comroe asked if the applicant will submit a formal application for waivers. Mr. Farrall said they would and are scheduled to be before the staff at a meeting on November 10. At that time they will hammer out some of the issues and determine how to move forward.

(2) Ms. Kricun asked, with regard to the Outreach Center which is located in a residential zone, if a variance for the church would extend to other facilities on the property or would a separate variance be required. She also asked if the sole purpose of Outreach Center is to be a food bank. Mr. Farrall said that the current house on property is used as an Outreach Center and that after the November 10 meeting they will determine whether they need to go before Zoning Hearing Board. He said their position is that it is an existing use and no zoning approval will be needed. Rev. Sowards said that it is currently configured to be collections, housewares and food. He said if that need is no longer there it will be configured into some other sort of outreach. Ms. Kricun confirmed that it would

- not be a residence or treatment center. In response to Chairwoman O'Donnell He discussed future use of the Glebe House as a residence for other clergy. Rev. Sowards said the hours of the Outreach Center are Wednesday and Saturdays, three times per month. They are also open for receipt of items. His hope is that, with assistance of the Colledgeville ministerium, that this will become a social service center. He discussed how this facility fills a necessary need. Rev. Sowards discussed the traffic situation, stating that staggered hours and existing parking means there is no issue with traffic. Mr. Kuberski said that he lives in the area and has never noted a traffic issue.
- (3) Ms. LaPenta asked how clients access the facility. Rev. Sowards said that they are referred by social service. He said he does try to service the local population and, after helping, refer people outside the community to where they can be best served.
  - (4) Chairwoman O'Donnell asked how he sees the ministry growing. Rev. Sowards said that at least half of clients are elderly and on fixed income. The other are multi-generational families. He discussed working with children on free lunch programs and providing food for the weekends. Rev. Sowards discussed providing flu shot and said they also have medical service providers who have said if there is a facility space they are willing to come serve the community.
  - (5) Ms. LaPenta asked if volunteers ran the facility. Rev. Sowards said that they do and volunteers were not just from St. James. He said volunteers from churches in the area staff the facility as well.
- v) Mr. Farrall said that any comments from the Planning Commission would be helpful:
- (1) Mr. Comroe stated his support for the project and asked when a preliminary plan would be brought before the Planning Commission. Mr. Farrall stated that it's too early to determine an exact time frame since they are only discussing broad issues now and if there are legal issues the process may be slowed down.
  - (2) Mr. Kuberski asked what they saw as the biggest issues. Mr. Farrall said use and impervious coverage. He feels they would not be an issue but if it is determined by staff that they need to go before the Zoning Hearing Board the process could be slowed. Mr. Farrall said that if they do not need zoning approval the next issue would be to file a plan and pursue waivers.
  - (3) Chairwoman O'Donnell asked if the Township was aware that this is an outreach center? The applicant said he was not entirely sure the Township was aware but that isn't a bad thing because it means there weren't any problem. Mr. Farrall said he did not see anything insurmountable with the proposed plan.
  - (4) Mr. Kuberski asked if there had been any issues with neighbors. The applicant said that there had not been any issues and that any use on church property will remain the same. They stated that the Outreach Center is far enough away from the property lines as to not cause issues but they will work with any issues raised by neighbors. Discussion was held regarding impervious requirement.
  - (5) Ms. LaPenta said that she feels it's a good plan and a good service provided to the community. She discussed the ability to be put left turn lanes on Germantown Pike because a need exists with or without the proposed development. She said that she things should be set back far enough so that if left turn lanes are deemed necessary in the future there is ample space. The applicant agreed. Discussion was held regarding drainage on the property.

- (6) Chairwoman O'Donnell asked Mr. Mrozinski to discuss how zoning would work in the R2 District. Mr. Mrozinski stated that since it is nonconformity, if the plan is approved and the church no longer wishes to operate the Outreach Center, the property would revert to a limited R2 use or a non-conforming church use. Discussion was held as to current zoning.
- (7) Ms. Kricun asked if this proposal had been discussed with neighbors. The applicant stated that it had not as the facility is far enough way from the property line that it didn't appear to be a problem. Rev. Sowards said that they currently have a good relationship with the neighborhood and that signs have been posted advertising the land development and no neighbors have questioned the project. Mr. Mrozinski said that he has received no calls.
- (8) Mr. Baird discussed the impervious cover issue, asking if using the three lots as a criteria could open up this tactic to be used by future developers. Mr. Farrall said that they would be discussing this with staff but if it is determined they need to go to Zoning for a waiver they will. Discussion was held as to impervious cover.
- (9) Discussion was held as to the phases of the project.

**B) Sidewalk Mater Plan Proposal**

- i) Maggie Dobbs, Montgomery County Planning Commission, discussed a proposal for a sidewalk master plan, which would be done by the MCPC in conjunction with staff and the Planning Commission. She stated this could be done under existing planning assistance contract and that the goal would be to create an inventory of where sidewalks currently exist, where gaps exist and create a priority list of where sidewalks would go in and recommendation for going forward regarding funding and viability. Along with sidewalk inventory, an inventory of destinations such as walking trails, parks, community destinations, etc., could also be created.
  - (1) Supervisor Eckman questioned the cost of the project stating she is not sure that they Township has budgeted for this level of work with the county. Ms. Dobbs said that the scope of work would fall under the current Community Assistance contract. She did note that there might be an extra charges based on any extra meetings but there is flexibility in the allocation of time based on the current work load. Supervisor Eckman said that this is a good idea but it has not been vetted through the Supervisors in regards to the budget. She also noted that there is already a starting point based on previous studies. Ms. Dobbs said that they would use existing resources and would have additional details as far as a budget plan and as to whether it falls under existing budget or would require additional Township funding.
  - (2) Ms. Kricun stated that if it falls within the budget it would be a helpful plan. Discussion was held as to the scope of the plan and it's uses.
- ii) Members of the Planning Commission expressed willingness to volunteer for a steering committee.
- iii) Mr. Mrozinski will discuss the proposal further with Ms. Dobbs.

**5) Motion to Adjourn**

- A) Mr. Comroe made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Kuberski seconded the motion. The motion *passed* 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** November 16, 2016