

**LOWER PROVIDENCE TOWNSHIP  
VILLAGE COMMERCIAL COMMITTEE  
AUGUST 7, 2007 MEETING MINUTES**

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**1) Public Meeting: Call to Order**

- a) Supervisor DiPaolo called the public meeting to order.

**2) Pledge of Allegiance**

**3) Roll Call:**

- a) The following committee members were present: Mrs. Bateman, Mr. Borai, Mr. Comroe, Mr. DiPaolo, Mr. Ferraro, Mr. Hager, Mrs. Maris, Mr. Ozoroski, and Mr. Stemple.
- b) Mrs. Satterwhite was absent.
- c) Also present were Tolson DeSa from the Montgomery County Planning Commission, Joseph Dunbar, Township Manager, and Director of Community Development Michael Siegel.

**4) Review of Meeting Minutes:**

- a) **MOTION** – Mr. Stemple made a motion to approve the July 31, 2007 meeting minutes. Mr. Ferraro seconded the motion. The motion *passed* 8-0.
- b) Mr. Comroe arrived during a discussion on the June 19, 2007 minutes.
- c) **MOTION** – Mrs. Bateman made a motion to approve the June 19, 2007 meeting minutes. Mr. DiPaolo seconded the motion. The motion *passed* 8-0-1. Mr. Hager abstained from the vote because he did not attend that meeting.

**5) Continued District Designation Discussion:**

- a) Pinetown & Egypt Roads:
  - i) Mr. DeSa noted that the Comprehensive Plan calls for PBO in this area of the Township, but the VCC must determine if that is an appropriate use for the gateway to the Township. He reviewed the various uses located in this area.
  - ii) Mr. DeSa stated that this area does not evoke a village atmosphere, but it could be a VC Gateway area with strong architectural design standards attached to it. This would feed into the Audubon Crossroads and GC area down the street and provide some more intense uses for the nearby apartments.
  - iii) Mr. Comroe noted that they previously discussed running VC all the way down Egypt Road. This corner has been VC since around 1982, and he thinks this should be VC rather than switch to PBO.
  - iv) Mr. Hager questioned the zoning of the area from Pawlings Road down to this corner. Mr. DeSa noted that the Genuardi's Shopping Center is GC, the apartments are R5, and then there are houses that are R3. Mr. Hager thinks there should be some consistency on both sides of the street.
  - v) Mr. Borai thinks they concentrate on the other side of the street first, with the corner of Pinetown & Egypt, especially since there is a lawsuit on the other side of the street.
  - vi) It was clarified that the Pinetown & Egypt Road corner is currently zoned VC. Mrs. Maris questioned how Nielson could have plans for an office building on that corner if it was zoned VC?
    - (1) Mr. Dunbar noted that Nielson has an approved land development application for the office building. When the zoning was going to change, Nielson submitted a conditional use plan for some type of a strip mall center to preserve his right to develop under the old zoning.
    - (2) Mr. Stemple questioned what PBO zoning would do the Nielson's plans? Mr. DiPaolo noted that the approved plan could still be constructed, and that the other plan is already on the books for VC, so it does not impact his plans.

- vii) Mr. DiPaolo noted that there are seven parcels going up this side of the road, and questioned if they should all be rezoned to VC? This is the gateway to the Township; so how intensive of a use do they want at this location?
- (1) Mr. Ferraro noted that there is a park across the street that will never change. He does not want to see anything on this corner. He wants an overlay that will prevent anything from going in on this corner.
  - (2) Mr. Hager suggested taking VC all the way down Egypt to this parcel.
  - (3) The committee reviewed maps of the area to discuss current zoning vs. potential zoning changes.
  - (4) Mr. Stemple concurred that this area should be zoned VC all the way down Egypt from WaWa to Pinetown Road.
  - (5) Mr. Dunbar noted that the intensity of the use would be determined by the uses the committee defines for VC.
- viii) **MOTION** – Mr. Borai made a motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that VC be carried from the WaWa store all the way down to Pinetown Road. Mr. Comroe seconded the motion.
- (1) There was a discussion regarding if the Gun Club should be VC or remain R2, and how to possibly draw a line through the property to only rezone a portion of it.
  - (2) **MOTION AMENDMENT** – Mr. Borai amended his motion to include that the VC area would be defined by the rear pin of the adjacent residential property behind WaWa, with a straight line drawn down from this pin down to Pinetown Road. Mr. Comroe seconded the amendment.
    - (a) Mr. Ferraro indicated that he could vote on this through the Gun Club property but not beyond that.
    - (b) The map depicting how the parcels in questions are already zoned VC was reviewed. There was discussion regarding the various parcels and where the line should be drawn. It was noted that the Gun Club is comprised of five separate parcels. Mr. Dunbar remarked that they might cause more problems by split zoning someone's property.
    - (c) **MOTION VOTE** – The motion passed 8-1. Mr. Ferraro opposed the motion.
- ix) Mr. Leo White, 2854 Egypt Road, commented that they couldn't just go VC on one side of the street and leave the other residential. He commented that the traffic in this area has increased significantly and impacts the residences. His parcel and the others along his side of the road should be rezoned as recommended in the Comprehensive Plan and also because of their proximity to Rt. 422. He would agree to drop his appeal if his land was rezoned.
- (1) Mr. DiPaolo explained that as he indicated at the last meeting, he needs to obtain an opinion from the Township Solicitor prior to doing anything on that side of the street. He has requested an opinion but has not yet received one, and is not willing to discuss this matter until an opinion has been issued.
- b) Providence Square (Grange & Germantown Pike):
- i) Mr. DiPaolo explained that this area is Highway Commercial (HC) surrounded by residential, and it was recommended that the area be considered for rezoning to a less intensive use in the Comprehensive Plan.
  - ii) The current owner of the land, Terra Supply, a landscaper, has the area in disarray with equipment storage, large banners, etc. all over the place.
  - iii) Mr. Siegel noted that the property owner came in last year for a zoning permit and indicated that he would have a landscaping office in this building. At that time he was told that anything beyond the office would have to go through land development. Shortly after the permit was issued, the owner began storing unauthorized items etc. Mr. Siegel and the surrounding municipalities have issued injunctions against the owner. This has gone to court where the property owner lost the first battle. There are seven citations against the owner, and if he does not submit an acceptable land development plan by August 15, 2007, the Township will take him to court again and shut

him down permanently. He is being cited daily for violations, and Worcester has also been battling with the owner.

- iv) Mr. DeSa indicated that the Comprehensive Plan calls for a new neighborhood commercial district for this area.
- v) Mr. Siegel noted that it backs up to Worcester's agricultural area, so VC would make sense for this area.
- vi) There was a discussion of the surrounding parcels and uses. Rezoning of this parcel will prevent what is happening with Terra from occurring again.
- vii) Mrs. Maris does not think it belongs in VC. Mr. Ferraro is not sure that neighborhood commercial is the best use either.
- viii) Mr. DeSa noted that they need to consider if someone would consolidate all of these parcels, what use could come in. Across the street you have historical houses. HC is an intense district.
- ix) Mr. Siegel stated that putting VC in there would protect the interests of the natural historic district and provides a gateway to the Township. Who would want to see a gas station go in there, as could happen with HC?
- x) **MOTION** – Mr. Hager made a motion to recommend that the Board of Supervisors rezone the HC parcels to VC in this area of the Township. Mr. Comroe seconded the motion.
  - (1) Mr. Ferraro questioned if these should be part of the Evansburg District on the other side of the park? He questioned if this area was safe to walk? It was noted that any development would include sidewalks.
  - (2) **MOTION VOTE** – The motion *passed* 8-1. Mrs. Maris opposed the motion.

**6) Gateway Triangle Discussion:**

- a) Mr. DiPaolo noted that the Gateway Triangle area is the Germantown, Ridge, Superior Tube area, and asked if anyone had given any thought to this area? He was thinking that perhaps Mr. DeSa could look at this.
- b) Mr. Hager remarked that this area was discussed in earlier meetings, and he thought it was to remain VC. The committee thought this was already voted on.
- c) Mr. DiPaolo thought it was still an open issue. He will go back and check previous minutes to see where it stands so they can discuss it at the next meeting.

**7) Any Additional Districts Identified by the Comprehensive Plan:**

- a) Mr. DiPaolo questioned if anyone had thoughts on additional districts from the Comprehensive Plan becoming VC?
- b) Mr. DeSa has the Perkiomen Bridge District listed as a to be determined item once they look at the Comprehensive Plan.

**8) Design or Dimensional Standards:**

- a) Mr. DeSa explained that when these committee meetings first began, he was asked to create an example of what one of the parcels in question would look like if it were developed under current VC standards. The Moscariello property was selected, prior to all the other discussions on this property. Based on current code, Mr. DeSa provided a plan of the two-acre parcel, which includes:
  - i) A 14,400 sq. ft. building;
  - ii) A 2,250 sq. ft. addition to the historic property;
  - iii) Maximum impervious coverage and parking with 57 spots;
  - iv) No architectural design standards.
  - v) This plan was developed with the following relief in mind: a special exception for retail use in a historic structure, a special exception for multiple uses on the property, and a conditional use for parking in the side yard.
- b) Mr. DeSa noted that there are no real requirements to connect the internal sidewalks to the street. There is no real communication between the historic structure and the adjoining building. They used a one-story office building in the design, to show the most un-village-friendly use.
- c) Major architectural design standards are needed. This can be done by district.

- d) Mr. DiPaolo noted that this was done to show a worse case scenario. When considering the design standards, they can review the RPBD, where bonuses were given to encourage things the Township desired such as burying the wires.
- e) The building height was discussed. Mr. DeSa has the plan building at just less than 35', which is just to the bottom of the Fulton House roofline. This allows for more creative design of the building.
- f) Mr. Siegel suggested bringing up the design standards for the RPBD at the next meeting so the committee can use them as a starting point.
- g) Mr. DiPaolo noted that they want to provide incentives to preserve historic buildings, but must also have appropriate uses.
- h) Mr. DeSa noted that some items they may want to encourage, such as parking in the side yard, currently require zoning relief. These types of items should be permitted within the district so that additional relief is not required. There was a general discussion of various items where this would apply.
- i) Mr. Stemple noted that some design standards they would want for Evansburg would not apply to Audubon. Mr. DeSa indicated that they would have different design standards for different VC districts, such as having less by right uses in Evansburg and more in Audubon.
- j) Mr. Hager would like to see Germantown Pike cleaned up, with uniform design standards along the front, and sidewalks in the area. Mr. DeSa noted that the RPBD has good architectural standards, and perhaps they start with that but trim down some of the uses, to eliminate uses such as gas stations or more intense uses.
- k) Mr. DiPaolo suggested that they begin going through the current ordinance.
- l) Mr. DiPaolo reviewed various footprints of buildings in the area for comparison.
- m) Mr. Borai requested that everyone review the ordinance provided by Mr. McGrory at the last meeting. There are items that he removed that are currently in code, and these need to be carefully reviewed and discussed prior to this ordinance passing.

**9) Discussion of Upcoming Agenda & Meeting Date:**

- a) Dimensional standards will be discussed at the next meeting.

**10) Public Comment:**

- a) None

**11) Adjournment:**

- a) **MOTION** – Mr. Stemple made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Ferraro seconded the motion. The motion *passed* 9-0.

**Upcoming Meetings:**      August 21, 2007  
    September 4, 2007  
    September 18, 2007