

**LOWER PROVIDENCE TOWNSHIP
VILLAGE COMMERCIAL COMMITTEE MEETING
APRIL 15, 2008 MEETING MINUTES**

1) Public Meeting: Call to Order

- a) Supervisor DiPaolo called the public meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2) Roll Call:

- a) The following committee members were present: Mr. Comroe, Mr. DiPaolo, Mr. Hager, Mrs. Maris, Mr. Ozorowski, and Mr. Stemple.
- b) Mrs. Bateman arrived late.
- c) Mr. Borai, Mr. Ferraro, and Mrs. Satterwhite were absent.
- d) Also present were Mr. Watson Olszewski from the Montgomery County Planning Commission, Mr. Joseph Dunbar, Township Manager, and Mr. William Roth, Director of Special Projects and Technology.

3) Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:

- a) **MOTION** – Mr. Hager made a motion to move the meeting minutes from October 30, 2007, February 18, 2008, February 26, 2008, March 4, 2008, March 18, 2008, and April 1, 2008 into the Township record, and to provide a two-week time period for Village Commercial Committee members to submit any changes to these minutes in writing. Mr. Ozorowski seconded the motion. The motion *passed* 6-0.

4) Discussion of text changes to the Village Commercial Ordinance for the Audubon area:

- a) Mr. DiPaolo explained that the Village Commercial Committee (VCC) had begun revising the text from the proposed Evansburg Village Commercial Ordinance (EVC) to fit other VC areas, primarily the Audubon area. Mr. Siegel had recommended that to solve the problem with sidewalks, they require sidewalk installation with a change of use at the U&O. This was distributed in an e-mail and needs to be discussed this evening.
- b) Mr. Olszewski distributed a slightly revised draft of the proposed Audubon VC Ordinance, which included some legislative intent changes, a few use changes, and some changes to dimensional and coverage standards as discussed last meeting. They need to determine how different sizes fit on the lots in Audubon.
- i) Mr. Olszewski had been asked to provide a diagram of how a 3,000 sq. ft. building would look on a typical Audubon VC lot. However, he has reduced this to a 2,000 sq. ft. building because once he began measuring existing buildings, they were about half the size he anticipated.
- ii) Mrs. Bateman arrived during this discussion.
- iii) Mr. Olszewski noted that most lots are about 75' wide with a range of 50' to 100'. A 65' wide parking lot would fit on most lots. From 14-16 parking spaces would fit on the maximum footprint.
- iv) Mr. Ozorowski remarked that if the maximum footprint is 2,000 sq. ft., there is no incentive for anyone to combine lots together. If they keep it at 3,000

- sq. ft., and limit it through dimensional side yard setbacks to limit the space you build on.
- v) Mr. Olszewski commented that if you tear down a building and construct a 4,000 sq. ft. office building, there might not be enough parking spaces. Mr. Stemple noted that a 4,000 sq. ft. retail use would have a similar problem.
 - vi) One parking space requires about 250 sq. ft. The lot sizes will limit the number of parking spaces that can be built.
- c) Mrs. Maris expressed concern with far exceeding impervious coverage limits between the buildings and parking areas.
- i) Mr. Olszewski noted that Class 1 & 2 uses allow 50% impervious coverage.
 - ii) There was a general discussion of impervious coverage limits and the effect on parking availability. They reduced the parking space size to 200 sq. ft., but cart way widths, turning radius etc. must still be taken into consideration.
 - iii) Mr. Ozorowski suggested they consider just allowing the expansion of existing buildings.
 - iv) Mr. Dunbar noted that might not be economically feasible. He noted they are trying to encourage reuse of existing facilities, but also need to consider ingress and egress. Currently there is not much traffic in and out of these properties, and safety must be considered.
 - v) Mr. Hager suggested using some type of connector driveway in back of the properties to go in off of Egypt Road, and exit onto Park Avenue.
- d) Mr. Olszewski questioned if it was better to keep seven small businesses or make one larger building?
- i) Mr. Dunbar remarked they should require a conditional use and have some type of village architectural standards.
 - ii) Mr. DiPaolo suggested allowing for combination of no more than two parcels. They would need design standards for architectural details. Mr. Hager cautioned against losing the village character.
 - iii) Mr. Olszewski noted that Lower Frederick has a new ordinance that allows combining two existing houses with an addition between the buildings to save the streetscape appearance while allowing for more parking. The only problem with this is that the uses may not be compatible. Mr. Stemple commented that would only work if the property owner were the same.
 - iv) There was a discussion of building sizes, and preserving the existing buildings, and balancing that with incentives to get the desired improvements installed.
 - v) Mr. Dunbar noted that with the Ridge Pike Business District they provided a density bump to encourage developers to install improvements.
 - vi) Mr. Stemple commented he could only see them going to a two-story building.
 - vii) Mrs. Maris commented that the Township wants VC, but they can't tell people what to build. The ordinance can limit the sizes, provide uses etc., but it will be up to the people with ideas who come in to build their businesses. If the Township wants to keep it small they need to keep the footprint small in the ordinance.

- viii) Mr. Stemple noted that if the ordinance allows for retail uses, people would assume that they can open a retail use on these lots, but they will need parking so it will create a problem for the potential business owners.
- ix) Mr. Olszewski explained that the way the ordinance is currently written, each of the property owners could use their existing house for a Class 1 or 2 use and have a small business. It would be a small business because they are small houses. But, would they want to do this? The main problem with this is that each property would probably want to use their existing driveway.
- x) Mr. Stemple suggested using the cross access easement idea behind the houses. Mrs. Maris noted that if the uses were mixed, with some residential, the residents would not want people driving past their properties. Mr. Olszewski remarked that they could create easements to use later.
- xi) Mr. Dunbar questioned if the property owner would have to get an HOP from PennDOT if they change their driveways? Mr. Olszewski thinks the driveways are probably “minimum use” currently, and they would go up to “low volume” driveways allowing up to 750 trips per day.
- xii) Mr. Ozorowski commented that the change in driveway classification would be too much for a small business owner, requiring significant plans etc.
- xiii) Mr. Dunbar suggested that they have one type of criteria for existing homes/businesses, and a more stringent set for new uses requiring changes.
- xiv) There was another discussion debating where to set the minimum lot size, 2,000 or 3,000 sq. ft., and what would best provide incentives to add improvements.
- xv) Mr. Comroe asked if someone would be able to buy all the lots and combine them to install a strip mall? Mr. DiPaolo noted they would only be allowed to combine two lots. Mr. Comroe asked if it was legal to limit them because he would not want to see this challenged. Mr. Ozorowski explained that you couldn't limit them to two lots, but to the lot size, building footprint etc. to control the size of development. It would not be beneficial to combine six lots for a 4,000 sq. ft. building. It is legal to limit it to the footprint.
- e) Mr. DiPaolo asked if the group was comfortable with the limit of a footprint that would fit on two lots? The group indicated they were.
 - i) Mr. Ozorowski remarked they need to be careful to limit multiple uses and number of buildings permitted on one lot.
 - ii) Mr. Olszewski remarked that by right they can use the existing building, and by conditional use they can expand on it.
 - iii) The issue of incentives for improvements was discussed again.
 - iv) Mr. Hager asked what percentage of expansion was allowed for non-conforming uses in RPBD? Mr. Dunbar thinks it is 20-25%.
 - v) Mr. Ozorowski noted that currently a Class 3 use needs 20,000 sq. ft. for a 5,000 sq. ft. footprint. The group discussed what appropriate ratios of lot size to building footprint size would be. Mr. Ozorowski questioned if the mocked-up lots showing what space the buildings would take up on the lots were to an accurate scale?

- vi) Mr. DiPaolo questioned if the group was OK with a 4,000 sq. ft. maximum footprint on combined lots? Is that reasonable or should they allow multiple buildings?
 - vii) Mr. Hager and Mr. Stemple do not like the idea of multiple buildings, but are OK with a 4,000 sq. ft. maximum footprint.
 - viii) The group reviewed lot sizes for several of the larger parcels to determine if 4,000 sq. ft. would work. These parcels ranged from 25,500 sq. ft. up to 49,500 sq. ft. It was decided that 30,000 sq. ft. should be the minimum lot size for a 4,000 sq. ft. footprint. They need to see what lot/footprint ratio would work in Evansburg too.
 - ix) Mr. Ozorowski commented that someone would still have to come in for a Conditional Use for this. Mr. Olszewski asked if it would result in teardowns? Mr. Ozorowski suggested providing an incentive of a 15-20% increase to expand the use if they don't tear down the existing buildings.
 - x) Mr. DiPaolo questioned what the footprint should be for a lot size below 30,000 sq. ft.? Mr. Ozorowski indicated they could fall back on the Class 1 & 2 use guidelines, and with Class 3 (30,000 sq. ft.+) you provide the incentive.
 - xi) Mr. Dunbar noted that in the RPBD, you get a 20% bump in the bulk density of the existing building if you meet certain criteria and buffer requirements.
 - xii) Mr. Hager noted that they want the sidewalks and other improvements installed. Mr. DiPaolo indicated that they could require sidewalk installation as the use changes.
 - xiii) Mr. Olszewski noted they could just require the cross-access easement as well. Mr. Hager suggested they require it, but also give the boost.
 - xiv) Mr. Olszewski noted there is a benefit to having two businesses share a driveway, so perhaps they can do a bonus for that too.
 - xv) **MOTION** – Mr. Ozorowski made a motion that for Class 3 uses the maximum square footage of a building will be 4,000 sq. ft., and the minimum lot size will be 30,000 square feet, *excluding* the ultimate right-of-way. Mr. Comroe seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.
- f) There was a discussion of impervious coverage options allowed with Class 1 & 2 uses. Also, any by right expansion will require a cross access easement, but they will get the bump in impervious coverage.
- i) In the RPBD, there is a 20% bump in the maximum impervious coverage as an incentive to install improvements.
 - ii) It was suggested a 25% bump be used for the Audubon VC area.
 - iii) The bumps provided are in addition to the current maximum coverage, for example a 25% bump to 50% maximum coverage would permit 75% maximum coverage.
 - iv) There was a general discussion of how such bumps would work. Perhaps they can provide a different incentive, not the bumps, but waiving certain fees for installing sidewalks. This will have to be decided.
 - v) **ACTION ITEM** – Mr. Olszewski will provide mock-up renderings with scenarios of how the bump will impact typical parcels in Audubon.
 - vi) Mr. Ozorowski asked that the renderings be done at 40% and 60% to see what fits with the parking, and with existing setback and buffer requirements.

- g) There was a discussion of what can be done by right or by conditional use. Audubon is different from Evansburg because of the historical aspect. By right could be expanded as long as they are required to install sidewalks and provide the rear easement access, or other desired changes.
 - i) Perhaps some of these could be handled as a deminimus land development.
 - ii) Mr. Stemple asked what they are permitted to do right now? Can they expand by right? Mr. DiPaolo noted that if it is an existing, non-conforming building they get a one-time shot at a 25% expansion. But they have to get a special exception from the Zoning Hearing Board.
 - iii) Mr. Comroe offered to arrange for VCC members to visit the Audubon VC property of his wife's friend, Mrs. Woltemate, so they can see what the area is like close-up. Mr. Ozorowski suggested it would be good to do that just prior to the next meeting.
 - iv) Mr. Hager asked that for the mock-ups, show a 50% increase in an existing building up to 2,000 sq. ft.
- h) Mr. DiPaolo noted that design standards are still an outstanding issue.
- i) **ACTION ITEM** – Mr. Olszewski will see if he can find the books / manuals that Mr. DeSa previously referenced that contain examples of design standards and architectural features.

5) Upcoming Meeting:

- a) The next meeting will be May 6, 2008 at 7 p.m.
- b) Mr. Dunbar noted that the American Revolution Center is holding an open house at Chadwick's tomorrow from 6:30-8:30 to provide information to the public on various aspects of their plan.
- c) Mr. Olszewski noted that the Montgomery County Planning Commission was holding a class on Subdivision and Land Development Review on May 6, 2007 for anyone interested in attending.

6) Adjournment:

- a) **MOTION** – Mr. Stemple made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Ozorowski seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.