

**PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING  
DECEMBER 17, 2018**

A regular meeting of the Plainfield Township Planning Commission was held on Monday, December 17, 2018 at the Plainfield Township Municipal Building located at 6292 Sullivan Trail, Nazareth, PA, 18064.

Chairman, Paul Levits, called the meeting to order at 6:58 P.M.

The Pledge of Allegiance was performed.

**ROLL CALL:**

The following Commissioners answered roll call: Chairman, Paul Levits, Vice Chairman, Robert Simpson, Robin Dingle, and Jeffrey Beavan.

Also present were Secretary, Paige Gerstenberg, Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, Zoning Officer, John Lezoche, Solicitor, David Backenstoe, and Township Engineer, Mike Kukles.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**1. APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 19, 2018 REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES:**

**ACTION: Motion was made by Robert Simpson and seconded by Jeffrey Beavan to approve the November 19, 2018 Regular Planning Commission Meeting Minutes as presented. *Prior to the vote, Chairman, Paul Levits, asked if there were any comments from the governing body or the public.* Motion approved. Vote 4-0.**

Commissioner, Terry Kleintop, arrived at approximately 6:59 P.M.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. BACKYARD CHICKENS ORDINANCE- DATED 11/26/2018 DRAFT:**

Township Manager, Tom Petrucci stated that the Board of Supervisors and Township Solicitor, David Backenstoe, recommended to revise the chicken ordinance into a non-domestic animal ordinance and to loosen current proposed restrictions. Mr. Petrucci added that it was suggested to do a weight per acre formula in order to determine the type and amount of animal that can be allowed for a specific property. Solicitor Backenstoe added that the Board noticed that there are a lot more animal issues within the Township aside from chickens. Mr. Petrucci added that the ordinance will strictly focus on

residential areas. Additionally, the size of the property will be evaluated rather than the Zoning District. Commissioner, Terry Kleintop, noted that chickens are very light in weight. He added it is possible that the weight formula would not work for chickens based on their light weight. Mr. Petrucci added that he is looking to revise the entire ordinance and come back to the Planning Commission for their review of the ordinance.

Commissioner, Robin Dingle, questioned how this type of issue will be enforced in the Township. Mr. Petrucci stated that the intention is not to go the permit route and will be more on a complaint basis. Mr. Petrucci added that there are many properties in the Township that have issues with housing non-domestic animals such as chickens and goats and that on some of the properties, there are deed restrictions that prohibit the keeping of animals. However, the Township is unable to enforce conditions that were set forth within a deed.

## **2. CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE- DATED 10/16/18 DRAFT**

Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, stated that the EAC had concerns whether the previously proposed ordinance met the spirit of the ordinance. This ordinance was previously reviewed by the EAC for a short-term solution. There are two sections that were split by a road and both sections were cut off. Compliance of the ordinance was questioned as well. Additionally, there were a lot of restrictions that were in the previous ordinance. Mr. Petrucci provided the Commissioners with copies of the most updated drafted ordinance for review. Changes to this ordinance included updating and adding definitions. Such definitions included “greenway land” and “farm conservation”. Mr. Petrucci stated that “greenway land” is land that is permanently restricted from future development.

Commissioner, Robin Dingle, mentioned contiguous tracts within the ordinance. She noted that a contiguous tract is separated and segmented as it is currently stated within the draft ordinance. However, contiguous tracts are not separated. She requested that this statement be revised in order for it to be clearer for residents. Solicitor, David Backenstoe, added that some parts of the language within the draft ordinance needs to be revised. Mr. Petrucci stated that these structural changes will be made and he just wanted to confirm the overall intent with the Planning Commission for the draft ordinance.

The structure of the content will also be revised on page 10 of the draft ordinance within 9.4a will also be corrected. Resident and former Board of Supervisors Member, Matthew Glennon, who was involved in the drafting and adoption of the conservation development ordinance, stated that he does not want to see this ordinance take away the value of properties and homes from residents. A copy of the draft ordinance was provided to Mr.

Glennon at the meeting. He added that the intent of the ordinance was misunderstood in the past. The setback was changed as well based on the growing greener report that was conducted a few years ago. Chairman, Paul Levits, questioned how the 500 foot setback requirement was determined. Mr. Petrucci stated that he obtained that number from another project. Traffic circulation was also added/changed. Mr. Petrucci added that the decision lies with the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors of whether traffic circulation is necessary for this ordinance. This is an attempt to fix issues with potential future subdivisions. Mr. Simpson added that much of that information is subjective. Solicitor Backenstoe added that the changes will need to be done to the draft ordinance and the ordinance will need to be closely reviewed in its entirety on a legal perspective. Ms. Dingle noted that adding examples may be more beneficial for residents as well in order to get a better understanding of important parts of the ordinance.

Other organizational/comments were noted to add/change to ensure clarity. Solicitor Backenstoe will review and clarify the legality of any subjective language within the draft ordinance. Chairman, Paul Levits, questioned whether the paragraph in Section 10 is becoming standard language in all ordinances. Mr. Petrucci confirmed that this paragraph within Section 10 is standard. All necessary changes will be made to the draft ordinance and will come back to the PC for review.

Mr. Simpson questioned about the Appalachian Trail Ordinance. Mr. Petrucci stated that Mr. Charlie Schmehl is currently changing the ordinance including the layout of map. Mr. Schmehl will send Mr. Petrucci the revised version which will then be forwarded to Solicitor Backenstoe for a legal review. Once this has been completed, the final version will be sent to the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission and the Plainfield Township Planning Commission for review. That draft will also be placed on the township website for residents to review.

### **3. SYNAGRO DISCUSSION-UPDATE FROM LAST MEETING:**

At the request of the Planning Commission members, Solicitor David Backenstoe reviewed the pending Slate Belt Heat Recovery Center Land Development from a procedural standpoint in advance of the anticipated special meeting to be held on January 29, 2019. The applicant has submitted a plan, and the first round review letters were sent to them. The applicant stated that this review process has been going on for years; however, the specific review for this Preliminary Land Development/Major Subdivision submission officially began in February of 2018, and the review has been ongoing since that time. Mr. Petrucci has requested that the Township's engineers and consultants provide comprehensive reviews for all materials that were submitted to the Township by the applicant, including the Traffic Access Study and the Project Performance

Compliance Report. The Township's consultants include Ms. Trudy Johnston, Mr. Michael Brunamonti, and Mr. Jason Smith; all three will be reviewing the content and will provide review letters by the end of this week. This will be in time for the applicant to submit their final comments at the end of the year.

With respect to the upcoming Special Planning Commission meeting in January 2019, the administration will put together outstanding issues for the Planning Commission to review. Solicitor Backenstoe added that the Planning Commission must conduct a hardline review at the next meeting and should minimize the time spent on public comment. This will ensure that most engineering and technical comments can be discussed and addressed. In order to provide clarity to the Planning Commission members, the administrative personnel of Plainfield Township will provide a checklist of all outstanding concerns and comments. The checklist will clearly identify whether the outstanding concerns and comments have been addressed.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Having no further business to come before the Planning Commission, motion was made by Robert Simpson and seconded by Robin Dingle to adjourn the meeting. Motion approved. Vote 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Paige Gerstenberg  
Planning Commission, Secretary  
Plainfield Township