

**PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING  
DECEMBER 20, 2021**

A regular meeting of the Plainfield Township Planning Commission was held on Monday, December 20, 2021 at the Plainfield Township Municipal Building located at 6292 Sullivan Trail, Nazareth, PA, 18064.

Chairman, Paul Levits, called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M.

The Pledge of Allegiance was performed.

**ROLL CALL:**

The following Commissioners answered roll call: Paul Levits, Robert Simpson, Terry Kleintop and Glenn Geissinger. Robin Dingle was excused from the meeting.

Also present were Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, Secretary, Paige Stefanelli, Zoning Officer, Sharon Pletchan, Solicitor, David Backenstoe, and Township Engineer, Jeffrey Ott.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

1. Approval of the October 27, 2021 Special Planning Commission Meeting Minutes:

**ACTION:** Motion was made by Terry Kleintop and seconded by Glenn Geissinger to approve the October 27, 2021 Special 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 3-0.

2. Approval of the November 15, 2021 Regular Planning Commission Meeting Minutes- Request to Table:

**ACTION:** Motion was made by Terry Kleintop and seconded by Glenn Geissinger to table the November 15, 2021 Regular Planning Commission Meeting Minutes. *Prior to the vote, Chairman, Paul Levits, asked if there were any comments from the governing body or the public.* Motion approved. Vote 3-0.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Act 537 Official Plan Update Revisions- Status Update

Township Manger, Tom Petrucci, stated that the subcommittee meeting occurred where a number of questions were generated. Mr. Petrucci is researching answers to those questions for the next committee meeting.

## NEW BUSINESS:

### 1. Draft Warehouse Ordinance Amendment- Prepared by Gilmore and Associates

Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, presented a draft Warehouse Ordinance amendment. The amendment was previously advertised, however it did not pass. In lieu of a public hearing, the Board elected to have informal discussions during a regular scheduled meeting. The draft has not been finalized to date as the Township is looking for input from stakeholders. Ms. Stacy Yoder of Gilmore and Associates was tasked with developing the draft ordinance amendment to the Zoning Ordinance for warehouse uses.

Ms. Stacy Yoder stated that she felt the draft ordinance was not too permissible or restrictive and minimizes community impacts. It was decided to divide the use into small and large warehouses, where small would be considered anything less than 25,000 square feet and large warehouses would be in excess of 25,000 square feet. The existing zoning district map was not altered, the code will continue to permit warehouse use in the same zoning districts. The amendment proposed some specific use regulations, buffering and yard requirements.

Commissioner, Paul Levits, questioned where the parameters for smaller warehouses came from and whether there is a national organization that provides definitions of various warehouses. Ms. Yoder responded that warehouse trends were researched on various databases. Commissioner, Terry Kleintop, questioned how prevalent high-cube warehouses are. He stated that there are multiple “mom & pop” warehouses that need additional storage. Ms. Yoder noted that the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) created a community guide and within the guide, not much is provided for with respect to high cube warehouses. Mr. Kleintop noted concerns about high cube warehouses due to emergency and fire calls. Mr. Petrucci indicated that the Township cannot currently address a fire of that nature due to fire truck limitations and additional assistance from outlying fire companies would be required.

Solicitor, David Backenstoe, questioned whether a 100% visual screen is possible for warehouses and requested the approximate height of the screening that would be required for an applicant. Attorney Backenstoe added that in his experience, berms and plantings provide good coverage/screening within the Lehigh Valley. Ms. Yoder responded that a full buffer/screening would be required and that there are no specific standards outlined within the draft amendment, however, the wording can be altered to provide more clarity as to what is required of the applicant. It was stated that trees at maturity would likely be 8-10 feet.

Township Engineer, Jeffrey Ott, recommended that a minimum height or caliper for the screening plantings should be provided for specific species in order to reduce any potential issues. Mr. Ott also stated that parking requirements may need to be altered for small warehouses based on their size and number of parking spaces.

Zoning Officer, Sharon Pletchan - Warehouse Ordinance comments and questions stated for the record (no discussion):

- Two acre minimum lot size for large warehouse is too small; in most districts the maximum bldg. coverage is 35% per current ordinance; a two-acre site with 25,000 SF bldg. is already at 29%. Revision should be considered.
- Suggested amending code 27-402 requiring larger distance between principal structures under the warehousing-use or limit one warehouse per parcel.
- Can a new traffic study be required with each new tenant, or can the tenant at least be required to support compliance with the traffic survey submitted with the original land development? Can we require an updates due to growing traffic issues?
- Zoning would not be in favor of the 100% visual screen due to safety concerns and the need for visual code enforcement on road frontage.
- Sections in 27-316 & 317 currently restrict outdoor storage, zoning feels this should remain in the ordinance.
- Coordination with neighboring municipalities should be required, especially when project is near a border or affected by roadway in another municipality, for example, GI district in northern section does not contain an arterial road, thus would not be able to develop a large warehouse. However this road is a State owned and primarily within Wind Gap so the use should also be governed by their ordinances.

Commissioner, Terry Kleintop, also stated concerns about a traffic study, indicating that changes may be necessary to expand the study area to take into consideration the current state of the traffic area plus what is proposed. Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, suggested an Intermunicipal Agreement to discuss regional traffic concerns. With an agreement, a committee should also be formed. Commissioner, Glenn Geissinger, questioned whether there is a way to incorporate projections for traffic variables since the data is gathered. Mr. Petrucci stated he would need to research this matter in order to ascertain whether the Township is able to adopt something to that effect.

Developer, Nolan Perin, submitted a written letter to the Planning Commission for discussion. The Commentary Letter from Mr. Nolan Perin is hereby incorporated for reference in these minutes as though it were more fully set forth at length as "Exhibit A". Mr. Perin read throughout the document to the Commissioners. Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, indicated to Mr. Perin that the CRG Land Development would not need to abide by this ordinance as the Land Development Plan has already been formally submitted to the Township for review.

Commissioner, Terry Kleintop, addressed a concern to Mr. Perin about the absent easement information submitted with the Land Development Plan for CRG. Developer, Pete Albanese, stated that easements can be moved, changed or removed based on the needs of the owner/developer/utility company, etc. and can be worked out in a progression.

Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, responded to Mr. Perin describing the genesis of ordinance which was discussed by the Board of Supervisors in 2019 and has been raised continuously throughout.

Mr. Perin stated that he has additional properties under agreement and this ordinance will diminish the development plans all together. He added a lot is at stake for the Slate Belt as a whole. Mr. Perin introduced possible road construction to connect and act as a bridge to S.R. 33 North. It was stated that this plan has never been brought to the Township for discussion. The Planning Commission expressed interest in reviewing the roadway concept. Mr. Petrucci suggested a meeting with Mr. Perin in the near future to discuss the roadway installation concept. Township Traffic Engineer, Peter Terry, stated that the way to go about this would be to put together a 20-year plan. Mr. Albanese stated that the Green Knights would also be willing to assist with a traffic plan, however, both Plainfield Township as well as Wind Gap Borough will need to agree upon the plan in order for it to move forward.

Resident, Tim Clow, requested clarification for item 20.QQ(7), a specific definition for “sufficient” is required. Attorney for Jaindl, Joseph Zator, stated that he is aware of the concerns of traffic and transportation, however, he feels that the ordinance is troubling and problematic especially for the project currently proposed off of Gall Road which has not yet been formally submitted to the Township other than a Sketch Plan.

Developer, Peter Albanese, stated there are not many areas of the Township left for warehouse development. Mr. Albanese feels that the ordinance would reduce commercial property values. He went on to discuss what the Green Knights have done for the Township and what they plan on doing for the future. He stressed that he does not want this ordinance to negatively affect manufacturing as they have a potential sale to construct a spec warehouse building. Commissioner, Paul Levits, stated that the Township would like to see more manufacturing uses which is considered a separate use under the zoning code. Zoning Officer, Sharon Pletchan verified this fact.

Members of the Planning Commission continued to discuss large warehouse uses and their respective definitions. It was identified that special exceptions are proposed to be required within three zoning districts for development of large warehouses.

Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, stated the ordinance will need to be revised based on the comments received. A new ordinance amendment will be drafted and reviewed by the Planning Commission. Once the Planning Commission is amendable to the ordinance, the Board of Supervisors would then review the amendment for possible approval.

2. Clean Fill Regulations Ordinance (DRAFT)- 11/30/2021- Discussion Only

Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, presented the draft Clean Fill Ordinance and clarified that it would apply for when fill is imported in the Township from outside the Township line. The regulation assigns tiers and would require a Fill Permit to be submitted and reviewed by the Zoning Officer for consistency with the Ordinance. If fill is being placed into a quarry in the Township, there would be additional requirements including the need for

a Special Exception, a hydrogeological study, a Zoning Permit and any required State permitting. The ordinance is not currently proposed to regulate fill that originated within Township boundaries and does not supersede state regulations. Mr. Petrucci indicated the idea is to assist the State with identifying and monitoring these fill sites within the Township and to report to report any concerns.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Millie Beahn**- Ms. Beahn informed the Planning Commission that the farm adjacent to her on Hower Road was purchased by the Nazareth Borough Sewer Authority with the intent of storing and spreading Class B biosolids on the property. She wanted to inform the Township that she is putting up political signs in opposition as she does not want to have to put up with this type of situation. She asked about options for Township assistance. She further educated the Commission stating that the Authority previously owned property in Palmer Township which is permitted through DEP for biosolid spreading, she stated that they sold the property for profit and now plans to bring this problem to Plainfield. Mr. Nolan Perin clarified that the Palmer Township property likely reached a threshold by DEP and now, the authority can no longer utilize that property. He mentioned a legal case with biosolids and stated that it cannot be regulated, and does not think she has much of a chance disputing the use. The Township assured Ms. Beahn that the Authority has recently been in communication with the Township and will submit any required permitting as required

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Having no further business to come before the Planning Commission, motion was made by Glenn Geissinger and seconded by Terry Kleintop to adjourn the meeting. Motion approved. Vote 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Paige Stefanelli  
Planning Commission, Secretary  
Plainfield Township