

**RICHLAND TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JULY 21, 2008**

MEMBERS:

Tim Gaichas – Chairman
Joseph Pillart – Vice Chairman
Bob Goetz – Absent
Jim McChesney
Diane Pontoriero – Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jeff Walzer – Bld. & Code Enforcement Officer
Suzanne Owens – Recording Secretary

The meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Mr. Gaichas on July 21, 2008, at 7:07 p.m. There were approximately eight people in the audience.

With one typing correction noted, Mr. Pillart made a motion to approve the minutes from the Planning Commission Meeting of June 16, 2008. The motion was seconded by Ms. Pontoriero and approved by all.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Marathon Partners, L.P. – Consideration of an amendment to the tentative PRD plan approval for the property situate at 3700 Sandy Hill Road, Parkview Estates Plan of Lots. Zoning Districts “PRD” Planned Residential Unit Development within a “RA” One-Acre Residential, Lot & Block No. 2191-B-117. Plans dated June 30, 2008. Deemed approval date October 18, 2008.

Mr. Jeff Moersch, Marathon Partners, presented the plans. He stated the purpose is to sell the farmhouse acquired when they purchased the 60-acre farm. It is located in both Richland and West Deer Townships - the piece in Richland is 20 acres and has been incorporated into Parkview Estates Plan, Phase V. Mr. Ed Thaner, E.A. Thaner & Associates, discussed the comments contained in Mr. Scott Shoup’s review letter dated July 14, 2008. The topics discussed included:

Item 1 – Arc length of 62.86’ on west side of Parcel 4R-5R is accurate – This information is correct on Phase II recording plan, perhaps Mr. Shoup had an old plan.

Item 2 – Arc length of 133.21’ and dimension of 100.83’ on northwest side of Parcel 4R-5R is accurate – Original Phase I was done by North Hills Engineering, and E.A. Thaner took over when Phase II came in. E.A. Thaner took the liberty of changing the two numbers because they felt it was incorrect (it is a difference of one inch).

Item 3 – Road right-of-way width for Sandy Hill Road identified on drawing – the number “50” for 50 feet wide was added on the revised plan.

Item 4 – Front building setback line – the setback line from Sandy Hill Road was changed to show 35 feet on the revised plan.

Item 5 – On-lot sewage disposal field – Mr. Thaner stated this is somewhere down over the hill in the corn field. Once Marathon has a buyer, they will grant a blanket easement over the property to allow that owner to utilize the septic system wherever it is located. At the time the property is developed, all utilities will be brought to the property and the septic system will be available.

Item 6 – Creation of Lot 1 at this time constitutes an amendment to the tentative PRD plan approval – this is just a comment.

Mr. Gaichas asked what the reason was for making this a five-lot subdivision, according to the application. Mr. Thaner stated that there is only one actual residential lot they are creating. The application should have shown four parcels and one lot. The municipal line is the property line with regard to Richland and West Deer Townships.

Mr. Moersch supplied a revised plan which showed the two changes: 1) the building line changed to show 35’ and 2) the number 50 shown on the plan for 50’ wide.

Ms. Pontoriero made a motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors consideration of an Amendment to the tentative PRD Plan with the plan revision date of July 21, 2008. The revised plan was presented to the Planning Commission for 3700 Sandy Hill Road, Parkview Estates Plan of Lots in the “PRD” Planned Residential Development. Also, at the Board of Supervisors meeting the Township Engineer has reviewed that the revised plan and the map for the PRD has been verified that it still matches the revised plan. The motion was seconded by Mr. McChesney and approved by all.

Arthur King – Harvest Valley Farm – Recommendation, to the Zoning Hearing Board, on a special exception use application pursuant to Chapter 27 Part 7, Section 27-738 and 739 to operate a farmette with a retail farm stand at 403 Cunningham Road in a “RA” One-Acre Residential District, Lot & Block No. 2190-H-111. Plans dated April 8, 2008.

Mr. Arthur King presented an artist rendition of a proposed building. It is his intention to build a neighbor friendly, farm market/produce barn that goes above and beyond a normal commercial property. The comments contained in Mr. Scott Shoup’s review letter dated July 14, 2008 were discussed as follows:

Item 1 – Code Section 27-739 on minimum distance between buildings. Mr. King stated that the barn and the existing garage will be connected and this will be considered one building. Therefore, this comment is not an issue.

Item 2 – Sewage Holding Tanks regulated by Township ordinance. Mr. King stated he is aware of need to obtain a permit and agreement with the Township on this issue.

Mr. Walzer stated that this meeting is for the Planning Commission to take a look at the site plan presented and make a recommendation to the Zoning Hearing Board. Once the Special Exception is granted, Mr. King would need to come back to the Planning Commission for land development.

General Discussion:

Mr. King stated that he is declaring this a farmette (Section 27-738).

It is at least five (5) acres.

Crops will be grown on the farmette.

Mr. King is aware that a commercial feed lot operation shall not be permitted.

If there are animals on the farmette, they will not be fed garbage.

The existing garage will be used as storage and will be hidden by the building.

The soil and water runoff has been verified based on where things have been configured on the lot.

There will be no wayside sales structures – there will be a permanent sales structure.

Mr. King stated he will file the use of chemicals, if any, with the Township.

Mr. Gaichas asked Mr. Walzer if this appeared to qualify for a farmette. Mr. Walzer stated the main items are the acreage and the idea that he grows something that is for a farm. Mr. King has his surface water calculations, which satisfied Section 27-738, Paragraph F and Section 27-738, Paragraph H regarding County Conservation District has been done. Mr. Gaichas wanted it noted that they can not generate more than 50 decibels of noise at the property.

Mr. Gaichas informed Mr. King of the time restrictions associated with a Special Exception – his site planning must commence within 12 months of receiving a Special Exception; if he does not begin within 12 months, he will have to come back and request a 6-month extension. Mr. Gaichas also made him aware of a few particular items the Planning Commission will be concerned with when he returns for site planning: light pollution, noise pollution, dust, landscaping, access to the site and possibly bufferyards (if they apply).

Mr. McChesney made a motion to recommend to the Zoning Hearing Board granting a Special Exception to operate a farmette with a retail farm stand at 403 Cunningham Road. A particular item that needs to be reviewed in detail is Item 2 in Mr. Shoup's letter pertaining to sewage holding tanks. The motion was seconded by Ms. Pontoriero and approved by all.

Chatham University – Recommendation, to the Zoning Hearing Board, on a special exception use application pursuant to Chapter 27 Part 7, Section 27-784 to operate an academic school at the site of the Old Eden Hall Farm in a "RR" Rural Residential District, Lot & Block Nos. 2380-R-162, 2380-R-164, 2380-R-243 and 2189-L-199. Plans dated April 18, 2008.

Mr. Joel Aaronson, an attorney with Reed Smith representing Chatham University, stated that what is being requested is only approval to use three rooms of the existing lodge, which would house no more than 15 students per classroom. There is no construction or additional surfacing planned. The parking area that surrounds the rear of the lodge and the house has approximately 28 self-parking spaces and, since the classes would be at the same time, you could tandem park in the existing parking spaces and get up to 46 spaces. The ordinance for what Chatham is proposing would require 15 accessory spaces. The comments contained in Mr. Scott Shoup's review letter dated July 21, 2008, were discussed as follows:

Item 1 – Code Section 27-784.D on building height. Mr. Aaronson stated that although this is an existing building, it is not higher than 45' or 2-1/2 stories.

Item 2 – Code Section 27-784.H regarding Bufferyard P. Mr. Aaronson stated that Chatham owns all of the property around the lodge and all of the property on both sides of the road is part of a single parcel. This item will be explained/clarified to the Zoning Hearing Board.

General Discussion:

Mr. Gaichas asked if 15 students, with a maximum of 45, would be all together at the same time or concurrent. Mr. Aaronson responded at any one time there could be a total of 45 students plus one faculty member per class. Realistically there would be no more than 50 people there at the same time. Mr. Gaichas stated his only concern would be parking. Mr. Aaronson stated he believes they will have more than enough parking without reference to the two additional areas (one existing area in the rear to the side of the barn across Ridge Road which could accommodate about 10 cars and another existing concrete area that could easily accommodate 10 spaces). It appears Chatham would meet the parking ordinance; it is just a public safety concern for the students.

Mr. Pillart asked if there were plans to do anything to the access road to the building as far as paving. Mr. Walt Fowler, Vice President of Chatham, stated they were not planning to make any changes.

Mr. Pillart stated that there must be accessibility for a fire truck to get through the parking area and to the building. He also questioned whether there currently is or will be fire hydrants placed in the area. Mr. Walzer suggested that if there is not a fire hydrant, they may want to consider putting one in.

Mr. Gaichas commented on his personal interpretation on the bufferyard. He stated that since Chatham is the contiguous owner of the property all the way around on both sides of the road, as well as the properties beyond this particular plot of land, what are they buffering?

Mr. McChesney made a motion to recommend to the Zoning Hearing Board granting a Special Exception to operate an academic school at the site of the old Eden Hall Farm. Particular items that need to be reviewed in detail are 1) Item 2 in Mr. Shoup's letter

pertaining to Bufferyard P, 2) adequacy of parking for specific use, irrespective of the ordinance since it is a Special Exception, and 3) whether or not there is a fire hydrant existing on the site and if not, what the potential concerns are with regard to public safety and the lack of one. The motion was seconded by Ms. Pontoriero and approved by all.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business. Mr. Walzer did give a brief summary of the July 16, 2008 Public Hearing-Zoning meeting and the outcome with regard to the new ordinance.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Approved by,

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Gaichas, Chairman

Suzanne Owens, Recording Secretary

sro/

cc: Richland Township Board of Supervisors
Zoning Hearing Board