

JACKSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
October 19, 2017

A meeting of the Jackson Township Planning Commission was held on October 19, 2017. Chairman, Jeffrey Thomas, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Members present: Jeffrey Thomas, Sherri Hower, Dale Eagon, Ronald Padula and Mark Werkeiser. Michelle Arner, SEO and Zoning Officer was present. Sal Caiazzo, Township Engineer, was not able to attend. Supervisor Lester Wolcott was in attendance.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Minutes of June 15, 2017

Sherri Hower moved to approve the minutes of June 15, 2017, second by Ron Padula, all aye. Minutes approved. There was no meeting in July, August or September.

Old Business - none

New Business:

Morris Property – 259 Hay Road - Rezoning Request

Kara Klaus presented a request to rezone this property from R-1 (Residential) to C (Commercial). She and her husband, Mark Major, currently own and operate Trout Lake, Trout Lake Retreats and ISTC (International Sports Training Camp). Kara explained their interest is in purchasing the property on Hay Road and turning it into a wedding and events venue.

Kara demonstrated that the 22 acre property backs up to Township owned property that is zoned commercial. Kara further clarified that the rezoning request would not include the two smaller parcels on the other side of Hay Road.

Jeff Thomas questioned access to the property due to the concern with the hairpin turn in front of the dwelling. Kara emphasized that she would direct people driving to the site using Route 715 to Hay Road. There was further discussion about access to the site and the actual driveway into the property that will requires a Township driveway permit. Michelle indicated she had looked at the high point on Hay Road that presently served as access to the barn and she believes sight distance in both directions is adequate only at this location.

Kara added that their intent is to preserve the land, old farmhouse and barn. Developing the property with anything more than what is required, such as adequate parking, is not the intent. Events would be held from April to October. The existing barn would be the primary event space. Kara added that a little pavilion as a site for the ceremony is a possibility. Capacity for an event is currently estimated as between 75 and 100 people.

There was further discussion about safety with regard to traffic in and out of the venue and other vehicles navigating the hairpin turn. Jeff Thomas indicated this is his major concern.

Mark Werkeiser inquired if there could be subdivision and additional uses. Michelle Arner indicated the extensive wetland that exists is a constraint to further development.

Kara added their land stewardship is well known and they have routinely reinvested in the neighborhood. Also, historical designation was considered, but dismissed due to the additional restrictions that would be required. Maintaining the historical nature of the property is a prime consideration however.

There was some discussion about conducting a PNDI search to check for any potential species of concern that may affect development. Michelle expressed this is an important first step that is not costly and well worth the assurance that a project can move forward.

There was additional discussion about the process for rezoning and the role of the planning commission.

Sherri Hower brought up the point that once the property is rezoned, any permitted use in that zone can be considered. This prompted further discussion about other commercial uses. Township resident, John Motz, having familiarity with the property, expressed his favorable opinion with the acknowledgement that certain other planning approvals are needed. Ron Padula voiced his great concern about the roadway issue, previously discussed, although he likes the overall concept. Mark Werkeiser moved to recommend the rezoning from Residential (R-1) to Commercial (C) for the parcel being considered. Second by Sherri Hower, vote 4-0 with one abstaining.

Tannersville Physical Therapy & Wellness

Land Development Plan – Robert L. Collura Civil Engineers & Land Surveyors

Ken and Georgine Todd and Ryan Dentith from Robert Collura's office were present. Michelle indicated Sal Caiazzo, Township Engineer, is working on the review letter and Sal did indicate the plan is complete and can be accepted for review.

Ryan provided an overview of the how the property had been converted from residential use to commercial. Development of the parcel over the years, including a building addition and increased parking, has been within the threshold of impervious cover without the need to consider stormwater management. Now however, the proposed improvements will require attention to stormwater management. Ryan explained the intent is to replace the existing impervious pavement and propose the new parking area to utilize porous pavement. Michelle conveyed that Sal had expressed concern that the existing parking area has been compacted and the area is known to have drainage issues. Ryan offered explanation and details for the profile of the proposed porous pavement which involves a generous stone infiltration zone. Maintenance of the porous pavement was briefly discussed as an important element of proper functioning. Ryan further summarized the flow path of stormwater on site.

Michelle mentioned that coordination with PennDOT is needed due to the proposed expanded use. Ryan indicated the submitted traffic generation information does not increase the designation beyond minimum use. Michelle further cited the Zoning Ordinance section that clearly applies to expansion of an existing use and the review requirement.

Dale Eagon moved to accept the plan for review, second by Mark Werkeiser. All aye, motion passed.

Cameltop Site Improvements

Art Berry was present to discuss the project. Michelle Arner, Zoning Officer, first provided some background information describing the location of the site and historical data. Planning for this site was approved by Jackson Township in the late 1970's. While the parcel is identified as a Pocono Township Parcel, the building itself is clearly in Jackson Township. The original Site Plan was displayed and discussed. Michelle also briefly discussed the historical sewage planning in that the wastewater flows were calculated for a restaurant and bar primarily for skiers. The Sewage

Enforcement Officer at the time was concerned enough that it was agreed the flows would be monitored on a daily basis. These figures were provided to the Township for a number of years and then stopped for an unknown reason. Michelle further explained that site improvements have taken place recently that include rehabilitation of the building, addition of a wedding venue, expanded parking and installation of stormwater facilities including inlets and pipes. Michelle added that no approvals or permits had been obtained for the site improvements and she had encouraged the owner, Mr. Berry, to come to this meeting so that an agreement to obtain the needed approvals through cooperation could be reached in an effort to perhaps allow the project to continue simultaneously. Art continued in describing the project. This facility is located in the State Park. Camelback has a lease agreement with the State. Part of their lease is an agreement to show all the improvements within the Park; there is also revenue sharing with the State. Art indicated the State Park people encouraged him to do something with the building. They intended to replace windows and do some decorating. While working, additional discoveries led to more work and the scope of the project grew. Art further described the involvement with a local architect and more specific building improvement plans.

The outdoor wedding venue was also coordinated with the State Park people according to Mr. Berry. At this point the project grew to much more than they had originally considered. For clarification, the wedding venue site is at the top of 'Margies', a well-known ski trail. Original plans to place stone at the wedding venue led to the decision to place pavers there instead. Art continued to describe the progression of work that ultimately led to the regrading of the parking area and installation of inlets and pipes to control the stormwater runoff that was heading toward the building.

Art indicated the actual work on site started in April. The intent of the use is to serve primarily as a restaurant. After questioning, Art indicated typical restaurant use is during the ski season, closing at the end of the season in March. It opens back up in May and stays open through Columbus Day. Presently they are budgeting for use about 250-300 days per year.

The number of occupants was discussed as it relates to means of egress. Michelle expressed that a Land Development Plan is being requested. The plan should show the improvements and demonstrate compliance.

Michelle reminded Art that he had told her the pavers at the wedding venue site were placed over the sewage disposal site. He said that was correct. Art indicated that if anything went wrong with the system, the pavers could be removed as necessary. Michelle indicated that covering the disposal area with pavers was not acceptable. There was further discussion about the use of pavers, generally. It was agreed that sewage adequacy will need to be satisfactorily addressed.

Art further described the use of the restaurant was much more in the past, including bus groups. More recently, due to the deterioration of the building, use has decreased.

Art continued to describe the changes to the parking area, including removal of pavement and leveling out the upper parking area.

Michelle indicated that she believes a Land Development Plan is required to be prepared by a professional, submitted and reviewed by this planning commission. Art agreed, yet disagreed in his opinion. The first step is getting a plan submitted, Michelle stated.

Art was disappointed in that this project will not be able to be continued. He insisted he was not trying to hide anything or do anything wrong. There was added discussion about ski trails used as parking lots. There was much disagreement as to who knew what and when, and why there was no communication with the Conservation District or the Township regarding this project. Art insisted he was trying to do the right thing. He seemed to blame the Township for having to shut down the project and strongly believes he does not need a land development plan. Ultimately, he acknowledged he will need to find someone to help him and will continue to contact individuals to assist.

Comments:

Michelle announced that the Supervisors have a special meeting on Monday at 4:00 PM for the purpose of beginning to draft an ordinance for short term rentals. Planners are welcome and encouraged to attend if possible.

Lester Wolcott and the planners further discussed the planning that would be involved in order to change the Hay Road property from residential use to commercial. As a result of discussion, it was confirmed that there are extensive wetlands, the barn would need to be certified for commercial use and a zoning change cannot restrict other permitted commercial uses in the future. Additionally, land development applies and site improvements, including safety issues previously discussed will need to be adequately addressed.

Correspondence: none

Adjourn: Motion to adjourn by Ron Padula, second by Dale Eagon. Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Arner
Recording Secretary