**MINUTES**

**FOX CHAPEL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING HELD MAY 18, 2020**

PRESENT: Harrison Lauer, Chair Person; Nanette Bennett, Wesley W. Posvar, James M. Royston, Jeffrey B. Todd, Members; Paul Bell, Code Official; Gary Koehler, Borough Manager; A. Bruce Bowden, Borough Solicitor; David Kovac, EIT; Shawn M. Peterson, Borough Secretary.

ALSO

 PRESENT: Steven Victor, Victor-Wetzel Associates; Mandy Steele, Betsy Monroe, Council Members; 51 residents of Fox Chapel

 Mr. Lauer called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

 The minutes of March 16, 2020, meeting were approved as submitted.

Conditional Use Application 20-3 – 251 and 305 Old Mill Road

 The proposed conditional-use application is for a density development dated February 26, 2020, revised March 26, 2020. Victor-Wetzel Associates prepared the application and are seeking conditional-use approval for density development. This proposed plan is a consolidation of 251 and 305 Old Mill Road, located in the “A” Residential Zoning District.

 Steven Victor, of Victor-Wetzel Associates, shared a PowerPoint presentation with the Commission and residents on the plans for the Density Development. He also presented the Project Narrative in detail.

 Following Mr. Victor’s presentation, Mr. Lauer opened the discussion up to Commission members and residents. Questions arose as to whether the Density Development complied with the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Victor was asked to amend the application to address the points made by the Planning Commission when dealing with the compliance issue. Also, if Mr. Victor wanted to correspond separately about the reconfiguring of the 3.5-acre open space, the Planning Commission asked that he do so before the next meeting.

Mr. Lauer stated that the next Planning Commission meeting would be on June 15, 2020, at 5 PM. A Public Hearing on the conditional use application is scheduled for the June 15, 2020, Council meeting at 6 PM. The Planning Commission intends to make a recommendation to Borough Council after the Public Hearing.

Solar Panel Information Discussion

The Planning Commission has been asked to consider possible changes in the Borough regulation and approval process of Solar Panels. The current Borough Ordinance 400-14 (9)(b) states;

Separate flush-mounted solar panels shall be located on the rear- or side-facing roof, as viewed from any adjacent street unless such installation is proven to be ineffective or impossible. The removal of potential obstructions such as interceding vegetation shall not be sufficient cause for permitting a front-facing roof installation.

Betsy Monroe, Councilmember, has asked to modify the ordinance to say;

Separate flush-mounted solar panels shall be located on a rear- or side-facing roof, as viewed from any adjacent street, unless such installation is proven to be ineffective or impossible.  The need to remove potential obstructions such as interceding vegetation in order to make a rear- or side-facing solar panel effective shall not be sufficient cause for permitting a front-facing roof installation, unless removal of the obstructing vegetation would qualify as an environmental disturbance as defined in Section 363-14, definition B(8):  a tree six inches or greater in dbh, a unique tree, or a tree in a unique tree stand.

A broader proposal was shared by Mandy Steele, Councilmember, from a group called the Western Pennsylvania Rooftop Solar Challenge partners, intended to be responsive to the US Department of Energy’s SunShot Initiative.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Lauer and seconded to recommend to Council that Bruce Bowden draft an ordinance amending roof-mounted solar panels as a permitted use, subject to the approval of the Code Official. It would also incorporate language substantially equivalent to that proposed by Mrs. Monroe regarding removal of obstructing vegetation in regards to front-facing panels. Ground-mounted panels will remain a conditional-use.

 There being no other business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at

6:52 PM.

 SHAWN M. PETERSON

 Borough Secretary