

MINUTES

COLLIER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION ONLINE VIA WEBINAR February 18, 2021 7:00 P.M. Regular Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Vaughn called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

BOARD

Mike Ahwesh, Present
Tom Chidlow, Present
Tyler Lonchar, Present
Doug Price, Present
Kevin Vaughn, Present

STAFF

Bob Caun, Present
Janet Wank, Present

II. REORGANIZATION FOR 2021

Mr Caun asked if there were any nominations for Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary.
Motion was made by Mr. Price, second by Mr. Lonchar, for Kevin Vaughn as Chairman, Mike Ahwesh as Vice- Chairman and Tyler Lonchar as Secretary.

Mr. Vaughn accepted the nomination for Chairman, Mr. Ahwesh accepted the nomination for Vice-Chairman and Mr. Lonchar accepted the nomination for Secretary.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Mr. Price, second by Mr. Lonchar, and carried unanimously to approve the Minutes of the December 17, 2020 meeting.

IV. PUBLIC

No Comments

V. BUSINESS

Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Public/Private School

Mr. Caun stated that Emily Mueller of Goehring, Rutter & Boehm and Brandi Roselli of Mackin Engineering will lead the discussion of the proposed zoning ordinance amendment. Ms. Mueller is from the Township solicitor's office and Ms. Roselli is writing the proposed amendment for the township.

Ms. Mueller stated that the Board of Commissioners have provided the Planning Commission with a zoning ordinance amendment that will remove public and private school use from several residential zoning districts in the township and will add it to the B-1 Planned Shopping Center as a conditional use.

Ms. Roselli stated that her firm did the zoning ordinance update a few years ago and they were asked by the township solicitor to review the amendment and give their opinion from a land use perspective. She submitted a memorandum to the planning commission that listed three criteria when determining if the amendment is sound. These criteria include:

1. The impact the use has on surrounding land uses.
2. The amount of land zoned in the Township to locate the use if the amendment is enacted.
3. The consistency between the proposed amendment and the Township's Comprehensive Plan.

1. Impact: Schools have evolved over the years to be more campus like and the Chartiers Valley School District's campus in Collier Township is a good example of this. These school facilities have a larger impact on surrounding land uses due to increased traffic, increased noise, and extended hours. The current definition of Schools, Public or Private, in the Collier Township Zoning Ordinance is "An accredited institution of learning which offers elementary and secondary level instruction, or which offers associate, bachelor or higher degrees in the several branches of learning required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania." This would mean that in addition to elementary and secondary schools, colleges or universities would be permitted. These facilities are also higher impact due to their size and nature. Due to the residential nature of the R-1, R-2, R-2A, R-3, and R-4 Districts, it is appropriate to remove Schools, Public or Private from these Districts. Conversely due to the commercial/nonresidential nature of the B-1 District, adding the use here is also appropriate.

2. Land Available: Ms. Roselli stated that removing School, Public or Private from the five districts mentioned does not eliminate the possibility of locating the use within the Township. The use would still be permitted (by conditional use) in the S-C, PEDD and B-1 Districts. The total combined land area in these districts is approximately 2,400 acres. Collier Township currently has about 6500 acres when including the R-districts.

3. Comprehensive Plan: The vision statement as well as the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan lists compatible development, livability and curb appeal in terms of keeping the residential districts residential and not have the type of development that might have a higher impact that would affect these areas.

Ms. Roselli stated that the impact in the B-1 District would not be as great and more compatible with traffic generation and uses.

Mr. Ahwesh inquired about the S-C district, and Ms. Roselli stated that schools are currently allowed in the S-C district, and the amendment is not removing the use from the S-C district.

Mr. Chidlow questioned the approach from the BOC for a specific request for a specific use. Ms. Mueller stated that per the MPC, zoning amendments can be initiated by BOC and then sent to the planning commission. The BOC can identify an issue and ask the planning commission to take it up which is what happened with this amendment. She believes that was to protect the residents and the quality of living in the residential district. The impact schools can have on residential districts is the reason the BOC asked the planning commission to look at this.

Mr. Vaughn asked how the comprehensive plan plays into this. Ms. Roselli stated that the land use ordinances are to be consistent with the comprehensive plan as they are being

developed or amended in the community. Since Collier has an adopted comprehensive plan, what is proposed should be consistent with the comprehensive plan. She believes the comprehensive plans does support this proposed amendment.

Mr. Price does agree that schools should not be allowed in residential areas, but he also believes it should be removed from the S-C and PEDD districts. These districts abut residential districts, and it would be best to not allow schools in these areas. In addition to allowing schools in B-1, we should also talk about possibly rezoning Chartiers Valley campus from SC to B-1 and then changing the ordinance to not allow schools in the S-C or PEDD. He believes they should have more discussion on this issue.

Mr. Chidlow agrees with Mr. Price about schools in residential areas, but he does not agree with the process how this occurred. Due to this, he will abstain from any vote.

Mr. Lonchar said that the campus style school is where we are headed, and he agrees with the recommended changes.

Mr. Vaughn stated that it seems everyone on the planning commission agrees with removing schools from the residential districts in our zoning ordinance.

Ms. Mueller said that removing schools from the S-C and PEDD would cause concern, because it is only allowable area would be the B-1. Mr. Price asked about the B-1A district and Ms. Mueller stated that in the planning commissions has the authority to recommend. They can recommend modifying the proposed ordinance to remove it from the S-C district but add it to the B1-A district.

Mr. Caun asked how long the planning commission has to review this, and Ms. Mueller said the BOC would like it within 30 days of today's meeting. It will go to Allegheny County for review and a public hearing will be held. Mr. Caun stated that since there is some time, this meeting can be continued at the March 4th workshop meeting. He will get the ordinance and zoning map to everyone and they can discuss further then.

VI. ADJOURN

*Motion by Mr. Lonchar, second by Mr. Price, to adjourn meeting at 8:11 pm. All in favor.
Meeting adjourned.*

Kevin Vaughn, Chairman

Tyler Lonchar, Secretary