

**BOROUGH OF SEVEN FIELDS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
March 1, 2021**

Planning Commission Chairperson Suzanne Mills called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm. The March Planning Commission Meeting was held with limited attendance in Council Chambers. Residents were also able to join via Zoom.

ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Suzanne Mills, Gary Wojcik, Anthony Papantonio, Angela Nickum, and Dan Christenson

MEMBER ABSENT: NONE

ALSO PRESENT: Borough Manager Thomas B. Smith, Solicitor Megan Turnbull, Esq., and Borough Engineer John Balewski, P.E.

ELECTION

Upon a motion from Chairperson Mills and a second from Commission Member Nickum, the members elected Gary Wojcik as the new Chairperson.

Upon a motion from Chairperson Wojcik and Commission Member Mills, the members elected Angel Nickum as Vice-Chairperson.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Kim Grasso – 309 Covington Court

Ms. Grasso addressed the Planning Commission, reading from a pre-written statement regarding her concerns about Resolution 2018-25: Public Participation Policy.

Ms. Grasso stated that there is confusion concerning the official Seven Fields public participation policy at governmental meetings. The official resolution 2018-25 does not state that a written statement is necessary before 2:00 pm on the meeting day. However, this guidance and a written statement to the borough manager before 2:00 pm is noted on tonight's meeting agenda. She explained that she had discussed this with other residents who want to speak but are unsure of the guidelines.

Ms. Grasso stated that she spoke to the Borough Solicitor Megan Turnbull, Esquire, and clarified that Resolution 2018-25 captures our "standing" public participation policy, as enacted before the current pandemic. Solicitor Turnbull explained with our meetings advertised for remote participation. It is more difficult to manage free wielding public participation. Ms. Grasso explained that Solicitor Turnbull explained that now that we can have meetings with the public in attendance, a written statement would no longer be needed.

Ms. Grasso was glad that Solicitor Turnbull was able to clarify the Public Participation Policy for her. Mr. Grasso feels that written statements would hinder some in the community to come forward to speak.

John Ostermann – 608 Welbourne Drive

Mr. Ostermann addressed himself as a resident and the President of the Castle Creek HOA, the largest HOA in Seven Fields. Mr. Ostermann stated that he would like to address the commission about a subject that is not on the agenda and wondered if that would be okay. Borough Manager Tom Smith responded that he could make a statement but that the commission would not respond to anything that was not placed on the agenda.

Mr. Ostermann expressed concern for the car wash on the Zoning Hearing board agenda. Mr. Ostermann explained that the HOA has units that are only 16 feet away from the property the car wash is being proposed to be built. He asked the commission if the business that wants to build the car wash ever came to them with a presentation because they were unaware that they were even presenting. Mr. Ostermann's main concern with the car wash was that the vacuums that the business planned on using would be too loud and disrupt the residents surrounding it.

Mr. Ostermann feels that the community is not being heard on this subject, that the Zoning ordinance will be changed, and reference a zoning change at Brookside about 9-10 years ago. Mr. Ostermann had the residents of that area come to the meeting. During the presentation from an outside company, he felt that the company was not proposing but telling the residents and the board what they would do. The change was ultimately passed despite the resident's concerns. Mr. Ostermann said a council member back then told him that this was the only way to protect the residents, but he does not feel protected. He has no issues with the property being developed, but he does not feel a car wash is a right business for the community.

Mr. Ostermann stated that they had polled the community on Nextdoor, and most of the votes were negative. He also said that they have passed around a borough petition and have over 100 signatures. Kim Grasso also stated that her petition has over 150 signatures against the car wash.

Chairperson Wojcik stated the Zoning Hearing Board is meeting to vote on a variance and will only come to the Planning Commission if it passes. Once it comes to the Planning Commission, their job is to make a recommendation to the council one way or the other. Kim Grasso asked why it has already gone to the Planning Commission meeting once before, and Borough Manager Tom Smith explained that that is up to the company applying.

Larry Henne

Mr. Henne asked for clarification on how a variance goes through the process. Manager Tom Smith explained that the Zoning Hearing Board is an independent body from the Planning

Commission and Borough Council. This next meeting is a continuance of a previous meeting. Council has asked Solicitor Turnbull, Engineer John Balewski, and present evidence to the board on its variances. They are requesting three different variances; one has passed the other two still need to be voted on. The Zoning Hearing Board does not change the ordinance in any way. They vote on variances of the ordinance. If they agree to the variance, then it is approved and then sent to the Planning Commission, who will either recommend or not recommend to the council to approve the variances that they are requesting.

Mr. Henne then asked when the community should comment on their opinions on the subject. Commission member Mills explained that the community would give testimony at the Zoning Hearing Board meeting and comment at the Borough Council meeting. The Planning Commission does not have voting power. The commission can only recommend or not recommend the decision of the Zoning Hearing Board to Council.

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 1, 2021 MINUTES:

Upon a motion made by Commission Member Mills and a second by Commission Vice Chairperson Nickum, the following resolution was unanimously adopted with changes:

RESOLVED: The Planning Commission approved the minutes from February 1, 2021, Planning Commission Meeting, with changes.

2020 SEVEN FIELDS PLANNING COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

Chairperson Wojcik announced that the Planning Commission would be providing the borough with an Annual Report, and it will be two parts. The first part will be a cumulation of all approved minutes from that year's meeting. The second part is a list of recommendations sent to the council for discussion.

Public Participation Clarification

When any building is being built in the borough that the builders are required to match the surrounding area in color and design.

Looking at what might be safer access to cross Route 228.

Upon a motion made by Commission Member Mills and a second by Commission Vice Chairperson Nickum, the following report was unanimously accepted.

RESOLVED: The Planning Commission approved the 2020 Seven Fields Planning Commission Annual Report.

SEVEN FIELDS PLANNING COMMISSION RESOURCES

Commission member Mills created a list of certain ordinances in the borough to help committee members new and old to reference when they have questions.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commission Chairperson Wojcik made a motion to adjourn at 7:40 pm. Commission Member Mills seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

- Meeting Adjourned -

Chairperson

Vice Chairperson

Date Approved