

NORTH EAST TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Monday, October 3, 2022 7:00 PM

Minutes

Call to Order: Chairman Vern Frye called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. In attendance were Board members Char Kerr, Leann Parmenter, Dennis Kershner and Zoning Administrator Jay Jobczynski. Matt Putman was excused.

Minutes of the September 6, 2022 meeting were reviewed. Dennis motioned for approval; Char seconded. Approved—Unanimous.

Old Business:

1. Brian Johnston: Tax parcel 37-001-062.0-007.00. Mr. Johnston presented his final plan to subdivide one (1) acre from the eighteen (18) acre parcel owned by Kathleen Johnston. There were no changes from his preliminary presentation last month. Char motioned for approval; Leann seconded. Approved—Unanimous.

Final A-1.

2. Clean Choice Energy: Tax parcel 37-031-130.0-006.00. Grif Jones, Project Manager, Solar Development, continued our discussion of the proposed solar project on this property. Dennis provided an update on the workshop that Dennis, Char, and Matt attended last week at Summit Township. Two experts from Penn State made presentations and a lot of information was provided. We reminded ourselves that we are making decisions on land use not on permitting the facility, distribution, or operations. Matt and Dennis prepared a draft ordinance for consideration, but changes will need to be made based on what we learned at the workshop. We acknowledged that the State has not approved community solar projects yet and that two bills are currently working their way through the legislature. Based on the lack of State legislation and the fact that we are still working on our local ordinance, the project was tabled until we do more research. Vern felt that it would take 3 to 4 months to pass a local ordinance. Jay will keep Mr. Jones apprised of our status.

New Business:

1. Tad Burch: Tax parcel 37-025-085.0-003.00. Mr. Burch presented his preliminary ideas to subdivide one (1) acre from the twenty-eight (28) acre parcel. He would then like to combine the residual acreage of this parcel with a twelve (12) acre parcel—Tax parcel 37-025-085.0-002.01, creating a combined parcel of approximately thirty-nine (39) acres. This property is in a Preservation Area so no more than 2 acres can be removed. The resulting configuration was a flag-type parcel, which we prefer not to have in the township, although we realize we are seeing a lot of this as farmers sell their land but want to remain in their homes. (This needs to be addressed in the updated SALDO.) John McGranor at Erie County Planning helped Mr. Burch design the boundaries. Mr. Burch could put in a new driveway or maintain an easement on the existing driveway. A driveway from Archer Road to the barn is an option. This information would have to be identified on proposed plans. An easement will also be needed for the well, which is not within the delineated parcel. The septic is within the delineated parcel. Char motioned for approval; Dennis seconded. Approved—Unanimous.

Preliminary A-2.

2. North East Township: Tax parcel 37-015-018.0-093.00. Jay presented a proposal from the township to subdivide this 1.04-acre parcel, creating a 0.508-acre parcel. The remaining 0.6-acre parcel would be combined with tax parcel 37-015-018.8-092.00. The parcel with the house along the creek will be

subdivided out and sold. The balance of the land will be combined with Conservation Park property to remain available to fishermen. Char motioned for approval; Leann seconded. Approved—Unanimous. **Preliminary R-1.**

3. Larry Duink and Vern Hurlbert, residents of Sunset Beach Road, discussed vacating Old Lake Road from the west side of Sixteen Mile Creek to the west side of Sunset Beach Road. The Township owns this property now and there is a water line and a storm drain in this area. The Township would need a 15' easement for each of the utilities in order to maintain them. A survey will be required and deeds will need to be changed. The Township needs to officially vacate the property. Attorney Jeffreys handles this. The Township will need to flag the utilities. The two gentlemen will divide the parcel in half and combine them with their current parcels. Dennis motioned for approval; Leann seconded. Approved-Unanimous.
4. North East Campus LLC—Granite Ridge. Bill Unger, Project Manager, discussed progress to date and preliminary plans for future development of the former Mercyhurst NE site. They have been approached by a number of people with a variety of ideas. Mr. Unger relayed the following:
 - 48 cottages, 1,000 SF, one floor, manufactured homes but all different are being considered for the property in the SE corner of North Pearl and Sunset, west of the retention area. They will be rental, market rate (they found that there was a need for market rate housing), and property will be maintained by Granite Ridge. Access will most likely be from 89 and N. Pearl. Access to Sunset was considered but not likely. The current apartments are also market rate. NO Section 8 on the property...it is not needed. There are no utility issues.
 - Redemptorist Hall (northern most one) is the last of the apartment buildings being renovated. It is almost done and will be 14 2-bedroom apartments. There is a waiting list for apartments.
 - They have submitted an application for a sports facility for behind the field house, debating if it should be indoor or outdoor facility. (Must be where the baseball field is now.)
 - The Ridge Building if currently available for offices, small offices, or one company could have almost all of the second floor. The venue on the first floor will be available starting in January.
 - There are 476 parking spaces now. They may need to rearrange some of these depending on where facilities are located.
 - The Chapel still has a few minor improvements needed. It is not airconditioned so that is an issue they are looking into. (Told them to check out St. Greg's church—AC was recently added!)
 - The PC mentioned that there is no ordinance or clause in the zoning and SALDO to address this type of development. Char reiterated that as the Comp Plan process winds down, Erie County Planning is going to help us update both the zoning ordinance and the SALDO, and many of these issues are on the list to be included (Mixed Use Development, one ownership for a community of rental houses, garden homes, etc.)
 - They have had some events already and are anticipating many more.

Discussion:

- Jerry Weinheimer, 75 Hilltop Road, expressed a concern regarding Granite Ridge that any access off Sunset Road would be an issue with neighbors. Also, the Township should have requirements for curbs, sidewalks, paved drives, lighting, etc. Once again, we stated that the revised ordinances would try to address these issues.
- Dennis mentioned that he did research regarding potential grid solar installations in NE Township and where they could go. We learned at the workshop that solar companies are grabbing land close to substations and powerlines. They are targeting farmland because it is cheap and generally flat. There are two locations in the Township that fit this description: 1) a substation south of 90, west of 89, which is why the community solar project is being proposed at the Crawford Road site and 2) a substation at the PA/NY state line south of Kerr Road, which is likely why the proposed South Ripley grid installation selected the site they did. Sites within a 3-mile radius of the substations are ideal.

There being no other business, Char motioned for adjournment.