

**EAST DONEGAL TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**

**November 5, 2015**

**Minutes**

Time: 6:30 P.M.

Place: Donegal Intermediate School

Attending Members: Mike Guinivan, Thomas Johnstin, Charles Engle, Dwight Hess and Mike Brubaker

Township Supervisors: Allen Esbenshade, Denny Drager and John Murphy

Township Staff: Craig Underwood, Zoning Officer Jeffrey Butler, Township Manager

Other attendance as attached.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mr. Engle.

Mr. Engle announced one (1) Briefing Item on the agenda for this meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**APPROVAL OF THE October 1, 2015 MINUTES**

By motion Mr. Guinivan and seconded by Mr. Brubaker, the October 1, 2015 meeting minutes were approved. The motion was carried.

**BRIEFING ITEMS**

**Ordinance Revision, Adaptive Reuse of Historic Structures** – A request for an amendment to the East Donegal Township Code of Ordinances, Chapter 27, Part 5, Section 513 to further define the Historic Resources Map and to add a new section 513.15 to allow for certain adaptive reuse of certain historic resources.

Ms. Paula Leicht, Esq. and Mr. Randy Wagner were present to present the proposed ordinance revision. They represented their interests in a specific property located at the intersection of Marietta Ave. and River Road, also known as the “Riverview Towers” property.

Ms. Leicht provided some background and introduction as to the purpose of the ordinance revision. Ms. Leicht indicated that although she and her clients have a specific interest in this ordinance revision, the ordinance revision was written with other historically significant

properties in mind and therefore, would be just as beneficial to other properties within East Donegal Township.

Ms. Leicht indicated that larger residential structures, most of which might be described as “mansions” are sitting vacant for years because of the cost of upkeep, utilities and the lack of physical amenities. With these vacant properties Mr. Wagner indicated there is no market for such large structures with single-family residential use being the only use permitted within the zoning districts in which many of these properties are located. Ms. Leicht went on to suggest that if these properties and buildings, which may have historical significance, continue to remain vacant, they may very well end up in disrepair and the Township would then be faced with potential applications for demolition of these structures.

In an effort to increase marketability and providing an incentive to repair and maintain the historical significance of buildings, this ordinance revision was created to allow for adaptive reuse of these buildings by permitting additional non-residential uses. These non-residential uses would be permitted by Conditional Use and would have to meet specific criteria in order to be deemed appropriate and permitted including, but not limited to minimum lot sizes, location with relationship to public roads, lot frontage requirements, parking and relationship to the character of the neighborhood in which they are located.

Discussion continued regarding uses and the specific properties that might be qualified to incorporate these adaptive reuses.

Regarding the approval process, Ms. Leicht reminded the Commission that this would be permitted as a Conditional Use with a recommendation provided by the Planning Commission along with Comments from the Lancaster County Historic Preservation Board. The Township Board of Supervisors would grant or deny the application for the Conditional Use. As with all approvals of this nature, official public meetings will be held related to each application and the general public would have the opportunity to provide input on the application as well.

Mr. Michael Cassidy, 104 East High Street was present and provided input on the proposed ordinance. Mr. Cassidy indicated that although he was generally in favor of this approach to allowing adaptive reuse of historic properties, he did have some concerns regarding some of the uses being permitted as well as how this ordinance might be administrated going forward.

Insofar as this application is considered a “Briefing Item”, there would be no action taken at this meeting. The Commission was advised that required advertising would be accomplished in order that the public meetings for both the Planning Commission and the Township Board of Supervisors to formally consider this application at their December meeting.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Planning Commission  
November 2015

None

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM, on a motion of Mr. Johnstin, seconded by Mr. Hess.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Craig Underwood  
Zoning Officer

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION  
IS SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER 3, 2015 AT 6:30 P.M. AT THE DONEGAL INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL  
LIBRARY, 1177 RIVER ROAD, MARIETTA PA 17547