

The regular meeting of the Souderton Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 pm on the above date by Chairman Edward Huber. Other Commission members present included Jeffrey Gross, Laurie Reynolds (Zoom), Calvin Munden and Andrew Schlosser. The meeting was attended by Borough Manager P. Michael Coll and Danielle Baer, AICP, Montgomery County Planning Commission. The meeting was also attended by Borough Councillors Julie Munden and Donna Rogers.

Borough Manager Michael Coll noted that this is the first meeting of the Planning Commission for the 2022 calendar year. The first order of business should be the election of officers for the 2022 calendar year. A motion was made by Andrew Schlosser, seconded by Jeffrey Gross, to retain the same officers, Edward Huber, Chairman; Andrew Schlosser, Vice Chairman; and Jeffrey Gross, Secretary through the 2022 calendar year. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Chairman Huber asked for consideration of the minutes from the October 6, 2021 and the November 3, 2021 Planning Commission meetings. A motion was made by Andrew Schlosser and seconded by Laurie Reynolds, to approve the minutes of the October 6, 2021 and November 3, 2021 meetings of the Souderton Planning Commission as presented. The motion was approved.

Brian Grant of School Lane Development provided the Planning Commission with a rendering for the townhomes to be constructed by Ryan Homes in Towne Gate Commons Phase 2B. The rendering was reviewed by the Montgomery County Planning Commission. In response to the review comments, Brian Grant confirmed that the garage will have a depth of 19 feet and all units will have 2 car garages. The units are 20 feet wide, a wood deck over the garage will span the driveway. There will be a 2 foot stagger between townhome units. The roof will have a 6/12 pitch. Each of the townhome buildings will have one unit with a pre-selected bay window option, which is actually an extension of the floor. The townhomes in phase 2A had a simple front portico, these units will have a 4 feet by 8 feet covered front porch. A combination of brick and taupe and grey siding will be used in Phase 2B townhome buildings. The end units will have windows to comply with Zoning Ordinance requirements. Ryan Homes will provide a landscape package with each unit.

Brian Grant provided an update on the progress with the site work in Phase 2B. The sewer and storm drainage is nearly complete through the extension of Market Street to County Line Road. North Penn Water Authority has approved the water utility plans, with construction of the water system starting shortly. The developer is concentrating on the completion of Market Street as weather permits. Plans for the construction of the Dollar General were submitted for review and permitting, however, the plans will be revised to construct the building with steel in place of wood framing. Construction of the Dollar General is anticipated in the fall of 2022.

A motion was made by Jeffrey Gross, seconded by Calvin Munden, to recommend approval of the townhome renderings for Towne Gate Commons Phase 2B as presented,

conditioned upon revisions to meet the comments of the Montgomery County Planning Commission and the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance. The motion was approved.

The Souderton Planning Commission, in consultation with Danielle Baer of the Montgomery County Planning Commission, reviewed the existing Sign Ordinance, which includes regulations for murals. A recent mural project has generated a request from Borough Council to review the process for regulating murals. In preparation for this review, Danielle Baer provided the Planning Commission with a draft of proposed talking points concerning an application process, content review and location restrictions.

If an application process is implemented, who would be best to conduct a review and what items should be part of the review. An advisory review by the Historic Society was discussed, along with some general regulations concerning wall preparation, paint materials and maybe electrical permits for some applications for accent lighting. There is significant case law that prohibits content based signage regulation; however, objectionable content, pornography and hate speech may be limited. Significant discussion was held on restricting murals from front building facades. Given the close proximity of buildings in the downtown core district, such a restriction would significantly limit the ability to paint murals.

Laurie Reynolds commented that the Borough should remain open to providing as much flexibility to business owners to explore ways to attract visitors into the town. She suggested that the Borough should not regulate the size or the location of murals. Calvin Munden commented that he agrees with the direction of Laurie Reynolds, noting that there are tours in the city to view various murals. Chairman Huber noted that location of murals needs more review and discussion. Perhaps the Borough Solicitor should also provide some guidance on this matter.

Danielle Baer provided an update on progress with the Souderton Revitalization and Economic Development Plan. Over 800 responses were received from the community survey. This survey will help to develop a community vision for the Borough. She is working on drafting the first chapter of Borough and community demographics.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

P. Michael Coll
Recording Secretary