

HERMITAGE PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

Monday
January 8, 2007
Regular Meeting
8:30 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chuck Rogers – Chairman
Woody Steele – Secretary
Ed Benton
Laura Blaire
John Coupland
Shannon McConnell
Mark Passalinqua
Chester B. Scholl
James Tamber

OTHERS PRESENT:

Tom Kuster
Marcia Hirschmann
Jeremy Coxe
Cindy Pagliaroli
Jan Farmakis
Gary Hinkson
Joe Pinchot
Elaine Palisin
Mark Malcolmson
Larry Gurrera

There were 35 other people in attendance.

Mr. Rogers called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. in the Hermitage Municipal Building, Conference Room #303.

Mr. Rogers asked for public input. There was none.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Rogers asked for approval of the minutes of the December 4, 2006 meeting. Mr. Benton made a motion to approve the December 4th minutes. Mr. Passalinqua seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously. The minutes were approved as distributed.

SUBDIVISION PLANS:

Gulam Moonda Estate – Lot #1 (Trout Island Road)

Mrs. Hirschmann stated that the purpose of this subdivision is to consolidate lots from an old subdivision into the parcel now shown as Lot 1, which contains the existing home; this lot would be a separate parcel from the remaining lands. She noted that the developer should consider the possibility of providing access to Trout Island Road from the remaining lands in order to serve future purposes of those lands.

Approval of the plan would have the following contingencies.

- 1.) Drawing corrections
- 2.) Two sets of permanent ink mylars with signatures and seals

Mr. Steele made a motion to approve the Gulam Moonda Estate – Lot #1 Subdivision Plan with the noted contingencies. Mr. Tamber seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

LAND DEVELOPMENT PLANS:

Avalon Country Club at Buhl Park, Phase II (Forker Boulevard)

Mrs. Hirschmann explained that the purpose of this land development plan is for the expansion of parking areas and related site improvements for the Avalon Country Club. It shows a new access drive onto Forker Boulevard.

Approval of the plan would have the following contingencies.

- 1.) Drawing corrections
- 2.) Approval of Stormwater Management Report and Infrastructure Design by city engineer
- 3.) Approval of PennDOT Highway Occupancy Permit
- 4.) Approval of DEP Permit or NPDES Permit if necessary
- 5.) Two sets of permanent ink mylars with signatures and seals

Mrs. McConnell stated that she felt the parking design should be rotated so that people will not have to walk in between parked cars to reach the building. She noted that by making this change people could walk down an aisle to the country club and possibly a parking strip could be added which could include a canopy of trees.

Mr. Steele questioned the access drive on Forker Boulevard and a representative from Phillips/Sekanick Architects Inc. stated that it was a service access leading to a loading dock for delivery trucks.

Mr. Steele made a motion to approve the Avalon Country Club at Buhl Park, Phase II Land Development Plan with the noted contingencies. Dr. Coupland seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

PROPOSED ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS:

Recommendation on a proposed Zoning Map amendment to change the classification of a parcel of approximately 2.8 acres on the west side of Maple Drive from R-1-75 Single-Family Residential to R-2-75 General Residential (Palisin request).

Mrs. Hirschmann explained that the Board of Commissioners introduced this Zoning Ordinance Map Amendment on December 20, 2006. The initial Palisin request to rezone to an R-4 district was changed after the December Planning Commission meeting. Mrs. Hirschmann stated that recommendations of the Hermitage Planning Commission and the Mercer County Regional Planning Commission will be forwarded to the Board of Commissioners before their January meeting. She noted that the Public Hearing for this request is scheduled for January 24, 2007 and the final vote is scheduled for the February meeting of the Board of Commissioners.

Mr. Rogers then asked for comments from the public.

Jeff Trimble, 269 Maple Drive, said that he felt group homes should be located in rural areas and that he is opposed to a group home at this location. He stated that his research proved that if he were to make a claim on his homeowner's insurance for any reason related to the group home and then chose to sell his home in the future, there would be a 75% chance that the new owner would not be able to get insurance. He said that a group home would destroy the historical value of his home and his neighborhood.

Mark Malcolmson of Hermitage, son of Elaine Palisin, stated that a group home is not going in at this location. He said that three individuals are interested in purchasing the property and operating a funeral home. Mr. Malcolmson noted that if it can be sold for that purpose, that is what they will do.

William King, a 45-year resident of 189 Rexford Drive, is opposed to a group home at that location. He said that his neighborhood does not need unruly boys.

Mr. Rogers noted that this request is for a zoning change only and not for a specific use. He stressed that there has been no formal submission made to the Planning Commission to build anything on that site. He said that the Planning Commission has a duty to make a recommendation on a request and act as an advisory board to the Board of Commissioners. He reminded all present that the Planning Commission is not reviewing a submission for a group home, but is reviewing a request for a zoning change that would permit a special exception use of a group home.

Mr. Passalinqua asked if the use is to remain as a funeral home under a new owner, would it be still be permitted. Attorney Kuster replied that a funeral home is a nonconforming use and would be allowed to continue. Mr. Tamber asked if the zoning change request could be withdrawn and Attorney Kuster reminded the group that the request was for a change from R-1 to R-2 and it would allow other uses besides funeral homes.

Dick Ellenberger, 179 Maple Drive, stated that everyone should keep an open mind on this matter and that the integrity of Maple Drive should be maintained.

Patricia Arnsparger, 150 Maple Drive, commented that boys should have space to run around and live decently, and deserve a place of their own.

Dr. Coupland asked if there was still a need for a zoning change and Mr. Rogers replied that the request before the Planning Commission is for a zoning change.

Mr. Passalinqua asked the neighbors of the Palisin property if the property owners asked them if it was acceptable for a group home to be located in this facility. The neighbors replied no.

Mrs. McConnell asked what would need to occur if a group home desired to occupy this property in the future, should the zoning change request be approved. Attorney Kuster replied that since it would then be allowed as a Special Exception, a request would be presented to the Zoning Hearing Board for approval.

Mr. Benton made a motion to deny request for a zoning change. Dr. Coupland seconded the motion.

Mr. Steele asked the Palisins if they wished to withdraw the request, since it was no longer needed. Mr. Malcolmson replied no.

Bruce Kaiser, 52 Fairmont Drive, stated that a decision on this zoning change request will impact the entire community and that the school district will incur additional costs related to special education programs and counseling.

Harry Elberty, 51 Fairmont Drive, noted that he had a petition with 200 signatures to present to the Planning Commission. He said that the petition stated their opposition to a group home in the area and that rezoning could allow other ventures into the area that they opposed.

Don Matthey, 990 North Buhl Farm Drive, requested that the Planning Commission reject the zoning change.

Mr. Rogers stated that there was a motion and a second motion to reject the zoning change request. He asked for a vote in favor of the motion to reject the zoning change request. The vote was unanimous in favor of rejecting the request. The motion carried.

Mr. Rogers reminded the public that the Planning Commission is limited to only make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners to reject the zoning change request and that the Board of Commissioners ultimately makes the final decision. He also suggested that anyone interested in the final decision might want to attend the Public Hearing to be held during the Board of Commissioners meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Community Development Block Grant Program presentation – Jeremy Coxe, new Community Planner for the City of Hermitage, gave a brief overview of the program, noting that the anticipated allocation from the state of Pennsylvania is \$420,000. He said that the Patagonia area has been targeted for various road and housing improvement projects using these funds.

Hermitage Town Center Project update – Mr. Coxe said that the final report of the study has been completed by Strada Architects and a meeting is being planned for January 22nd or 23rd to present it to members of the various City commissions, staff and any other interested parties. The meeting will be advertised to the public by way of legal notice.

Shenango Valley Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan update – Mr. Coxe stated that the next meeting of the steering committee would be Tuesday, January 16th at 7:00 pm in the offices of the Mercer County Regional Planning Commission.

Mrs. Hirschmann noted that in order to keep the project consultants and the Regional Planning Commission informed of the concerns and comments of the Hermitage Planning Commission, she has been forwarding the meeting minutes to them whenever the Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan has been discussed.

Mercer County Regional Planning Commission update – none available.

There were no public comments. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Pagliaroli
January 12, 2007