

COVERT TOWNSHIP

PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE MAY 17, 2023 REGULAR MEETING

6:30 P.M., COVERT TOWNSHP HALL

Call to Order / Roll Call / Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Rendell called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Robert Brown, Lenard Berry, Joseph Frabotta, Austin Harding, Keneisha Harrington, Wayne Rendell, Lonzey Taylor

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Rebecca Harvey, Township Planning Consultant

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

Approval of Minutes – *April 19, 2023 Regular Meeting*

Motion by Chair Rendell, seconded by Berry, to approve the minutes of the April 19, 2023 regular meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

No public comment was offered on non-agenda items.

Ongoing Business

2023-2024 Planning Commission Work Plan: Chair Rendell provided an overview of the draft 2023-2024 Work Plan (dated 5.17.23), noting that three updates were made as

directed by the Commission's discussion in April. Specifically, the addition of 'self-storage facilities' and Section 18.15 as Priority #1 items and the addition of 'keyhole development' without a priority designation.

In response to questions, it was clarified that Work Plan Item 'Update Coastal Management Plan – Adopted 2004' has been initiated in conjunction with Work Plan Item 'Update Master Plan – Adopted 2020', both to be completed by McKenna.

Motion by Taylor, seconded by Harding, to approve the 2023-2024 Planning Commission Work Plan as updated. Motion carried unanimously.

Planning Commission Bylaws: Chair Rendell noted that the Planning Commission considered proposed revisions to the Planning Commission Bylaws in April, and after lengthy discussion, noted support for the proposed revisions, with the exception of Section VII. A. Accordingly, Harvey was directed to 'revise Section VII. A. per the discussion of Planning Commission and to issue a clean copy of the Bylaws with all revisions incorporated.'

Harvey provided a brief overview of the revised Bylaws, with specific reference to the amended text of Section VII. A.

Planning Commission review of the revised Bylaws ensued. The following was noted:

- Berry: Regular member attendance at meetings is important; would even support two consecutive meetings instead of three, as noted. Notification regarding an anticipated meeting absence is also very important.
- Brown: Is total number of yearly meetings missed a better benchmark than number of consecutive meetings?
- Taylor: If the Bylaws provide meeting attendance parameters, then a Commission member is aware of the requirements when appointed.

No revisions to Section VII. A. were proposed.

- Harrington: Is Section IX B. necessary to include in the Bylaws? If the schedule is amended, it will then require an amendment of the Bylaws.

Planning Commission members agreed to eliminate the first sentence of Subsection B.; to redesignate Subsection C. as Subsection B.; and, to designate the last sentence of the existing Subsection B. as the new Subsection C.

- Chair Rendell: Section XVI. references including ‘recommendations on budget allocations for the upcoming year to support work plan activities’ in the Annual Report. He noted that has never been exercised by the Planning Commission and wondered if it should be in the Bylaws.

Planning Commission members noted that the Annual Report is designed to assist the Township Board in budget development for the upcoming year and that it was a relevant provision to include in the Bylaws.

- Brown: Questioned if Section VI. is needed given the presence of Section VIII. - Conflict of Interest.

Lengthy discussion of the elements pertaining to ‘conflict of interest’ ensued. It was agreed that Section VI. should be retained but should be relocated and redesignated as Section VII. (and Section VII. redesignated as Section VI.)

Harvey was directed to modify the revised Bylaws per the discussion of the Planning Commission and to issue a clean copy of the Bylaws for approval at the June meeting.

Section 18.15 – Temporary Construction Offices and Storage Facilities Permitted: Chair Rendell reminded that concern was expressed by the Township Zoning Administrator that Section 18.15, as currently written, may be used to obtain permission to move a trailer onto property that then becomes occupied as a residence. He requested consideration of an amendment to Section 18.15 so as to allow a ‘temporary construction office’ (trailer) only once demolition/construction on the site has commenced.

Harvey referenced Draft #1 of the proposed amendments to Section 18.15 (dated 5.17.23).

Chair Rendell noted agreement with the proposed amendments but questioned if further modification is needed to allow for the occupancy of a recreational vehicle on property

during construction. He stated that he believes it historically has been allowed in the Township but that he could not see where it is addressed in the Zoning Ordinance.

Harvey was directed to review the Zoning Ordinance and determine if this practice is currently addressed in the Zoning Ordinance and, if not, to prepare draft text on same for further Planning Commission consideration in June.

Self-Storage Facilities: Chair Rendell reminded of the discussion in May regarding ‘self-storage facilities’ and referenced Draft #1 of the proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance so as to allow ‘self-storage facilities’ in the CC, HC and I Districts.

Planning Commission discussion ensued, wherein the following was noted:

- The Zoning Map indicates that areas zoned CC, HC, and I are limited . . . but these districts do seem appropriate for a ‘self-storage facility’, based on the stated purposes and allowed uses of each district.
- There is support for amending the Zoning Ordinance to allow for ‘self-storage facilities’, but there is satisfaction with the current zoning pattern and an expansion of the CC, HC, and I zoning is not necessarily envisioned.
- A more comprehensive discussion of the commercial/industrial land use pattern in the Township should occur during the Master Plan update process.

General support for the proposed amendments was then noted. It was agreed that the proposed amendments would be scheduled for public hearing in coordination with the proposed amendments to Section 18.15 . . . likely at the June meeting.

New Business

Harvey reported that she is proceeding with a request to the Township Attorney to complete a review of the Zoning Ordinance for compliance with the RTFA and a review of proposed amendments to Article 21 for consistency with the MZEA. She noted her goal is to have responses and potentially draft text for Planning Commission consideration in June.

Communications

Taylor advised of the potential for applications for a battery storage facility and a nursing home/affordable housing development in the near future.

Harvey reminded of the Joint Township Board/Planning Commission meeting scheduled for June 7, noting that it will be the Kick-Off Meeting for the Master Plan/Coastal Management Plan Update Project.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rebecca Harvey, AICP, PCP
(McKenna)
Township Planning Consultant