

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
May 11, 2011

The Upper Merion Township Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting on May 11, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the Township Building, 175 W. Valley Forge Rd., King of Prussia, PA.

PRESENT: Robert Krutsick, Chairman; Steve Elgart, Vice-Chairman; Mark McKee, Secretary; William Jenaway, Liaison for the Board of Supervisors. Robert Loeper, Township Planner; Scott Greenly, Associate Planner, and Maudy Hedlund, Recording Secretary.
Absent: Francis Schultz and Jaquelin Camp.

Mr. Krutsick called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A pledge of allegiance and member self-introductions followed.

Approval of the Meeting Minutes of April 27, 2011:

Mr. McKee made a motion to approve the Minutes. Mr. Krutsick seconded. Mr. Elgart, who was not present at the April 27 meeting, abstained. A 2-0 vote in favor carried.

Presentation: Brian O'Leary, Montgomery County Planning Commission Re: Model Ordinances

Mr. Krutsick introduced Mr. Brian O'Leary, whose presentation focused on a series of model ordinances tailored for Montgomery County from county, regional and national examples. Mr. O'Leary expressed his appreciation for being invited to tonight's meeting.

Highlights from Mr. O'Leary's presentation:

- The County has two model ordinances that focus on residential use and design, and two that encourage affordable housing alternatives.
- There are three model ordinances that preserve open space as part of the development process.
- The County has four model ordinances that preserve the environment or require appropriate landscaping and site design. The new floodplain ordinance is expected in June or July.
- Five of the model ordinances encourage better commercial and mixed use development, requiring it to be compatible with the community's existing character.

Mr. O'Leary's presentation included group inquiries on by-right and overlay uses in the residential office district; proposals in neighboring townships for maximum floor area ratios; bonus incentives; how business parks could benefit from a mixed use; and the County's series on renewable energy and planning by design.

Mr. O'Leary offered to bring Mr. Elgart's suggestion on increasing the incentive for alternative energy use to the County's attention.

Mr. O'Leary offered to provide Mr. Loeper's office with Lower Salford's Shared Driveway Ordinance and informed members that the Model Ordinance is available online at www.planning.montcopa.org.

Mr. Krutsick thanked Mr. O'Leary for his presentation.

Workshop

Old Business:

Digital Signs and Billboards

Based on the previous meeting's discussion, Mr. Greenly reviewed the following changes to the draft of the Upper Merion Sign Code:

- Page 14: Section 2) (f) of Digital and Electric Message Signs: "During daylight hours between sunrise and sunset, luminance shall be no greater than 5,000 nits. At all other times, luminance shall be no greater than 500 nits. An automatic ambient light monitor shall be installed on the sign that adjusts brightness levels based on ambient light conditions."
- Page 16: Section 3) of Animated and Changeable Signs: "Digital gasoline price signs for an automobile fueling station shall be permitted in either plastic changeable copy or LED form. The digital price sign shall not be larger than fifty percent (50%) of the total allowable sign face square footage and must be properly maintained to reflect current prices at all times. Images, flashing, blinking or scrolling lights of any kind shall be prohibited."

Mr. Loeper addressed the importance of a properly-written Code that requires digital signs to auto-dim.

Alternative Energy

Mr. Greenly's presentation on local renewable energy systems addressed setbacks; access; abandonment, regulations, ground, roof and wall-mounted solar energy systems.

Group discussion of roof or wall-mounted solar energy systems recommended deletion of Section 4): "Solar energy equipment shall be located on a rear or side facing roof, as viewed from the adjacent street."

Mr. Jenaway suggested contacting Bill Daywalt about the NFPA's 95-page research study on safety-related issues.

Mr. Elgart inquired about a provision for fuel cell technology.

Mr. Greenly asked members to review and comment on the section on design and installation of geothermal heating and cooling systems as presented in Collegeville's Ordinance.

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Minutes were approved on May 25, 2011.

New Business: Review for Joint Meeting with Board of Supervisors
(May 12, 2011); Article XXXI General Regulations.

Mr. Krutsick reminded members of their upcoming meeting with the Board of Supervisors and turned the meeting over to Mr. Loeper.

Mr. Loeper provided an overview of his presentation at the Board meeting and asked members for comment and input.

In closing, Mr. Loeper asked members to review Article XXXI General Regulations with emphasis on §165-201 on gasoline filling station equipment, §165-209 on accessory uses and §165-215 on outdoor lighting.

Adjournment: There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

MARK MCKEE, SECRETARY

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