

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
September 22, 2010

The Upper Merion Township Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting on September 22, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Township Building, 175 W. Valley Forge Rd., King of Prussia, PA.

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

Mr. Krutsick called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A pledge of allegiance and an individual introduction of members followed.

Meeting Minutes: August 11, 2010 and August 25, 2010.

Mr. Elgart made a motion to approve the August 11, 2010 Minutes as presented. Mr. Shelton seconded. A 3-0 vote in favor carried.

Mr. Elgart made a motion to approve the August 25, 2010 as amended. Mr. Shelton seconded. A 3-0 vote in favor carried.

Mr. Krutsick provided a brief overview of the last meeting before turning the meeting over to Mr. Loeper.

Workshop

Form Based Codes: Overview, Discussion, Potential Applicability.

The articles Mr. Loeper provided opened discussions on how to move from traditional, Euclidian zoning to form-based codes.

One article, reflecting Andres Duany's work, focused on "transects" or cross-sections which, when applied to urban/rural areas, show where different uses and building types fit well and where they would be inappropriate. Mr. Loeper offered to play a VHS tape of Mr. Duany's speech on the folly of the built-in process, in place in most suburban areas.

Mr. Greenly provided a visual on setbacks when development converts districts from residential to walk-able commercial.

The following seven districts were depicted in the Transect: T1 Rural Preserve, T2 Rural Reserve, T3 Suburban, T4 General Urban, T5 Urban Center, T6 Urban Core, and D Special.

From group discussion, form-based codes:

- Are viewed as intuitive and easier to understand.
- Allow communities to become re-classified.
- Make the reclassification process more acceptable during the land development process.
- Create a "by-right" development.

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From group discussion, form-based codes (cont.):

- Identify what would not be built again today.

The following are highlights from the group's discussion on past, present and future code applications:

To illustrate that the defining element of design accommodated vehicles and not people Mr. Loeper showed roads within a business area of the township that do not have a definitive grid pattern.

Mr. Shelton expressed his approval of form-based codes and recommended incorporating smart, sustainable growth patterns.

Mr. Elgart recommended incorporating form-based codes to accommodate an efficient use of energy.

Mr. Loeper referred to an approved project that, in compliance to DEP regulations, will result in the addition of the first green roof at the Mall.

Riparian Corridors: Overview & Model Ordinance (MCPC).

Using information obtained from the County, Mr. Loeper began the discussion on the purpose of riparian corridors -- to create areas adjacent to watercourses to keep them in a natural state.

Group discussion prompted the following comments and questions:

- We do not need riparian corridors.
- Riparian zones do not pose any real issues of encroachment.
- Heuser Field should be watered.
- Do we assess the water quality of our streams?
- Does the township have regulations regarding the use of chemicals by lawn services?
- Swales and rain gardens would clean the water.

The Commission determined that, due to the existing development of the Township, there was little benefit to the proposed Ordinance.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

MARK MCKEE, SECRETARY

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