

EAST GOSHEN TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SHOP MEETING
July 18, 2018

The East Goshen Township Planning Commission held a work shop meeting on Wednesday, July 18, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at the East Goshen Township building. Members present were: Chairman Brad Giresi, Jim McRee, Dan Daley, Ernest Harkness, Monica Close, Adam Knox and Silvia Shin. Also present was Mark Gordon, (Township Zoning Officer); Marty Shane, Janet Emanuel and David Shuey, (Township Supervisors); and Tom Comitta (Consultant).

COMMON ACRONYMS:

BOS – Board of Supervisors

BC – Brandywine Conservancy

CB – Conservancy Board

CCPC – Chester Co Planning Commission

CPTF – Comprehensive Plan Task Force

CVS – Community Visioning Session

SWM – Storm Water Management

ZHB – Zoning Hearing Board

A. FORMAL MEETING – 7:00 pm

1. Brad called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. He led the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence to remember our first responders and military.
2. Brad asked if anyone would be recording the meeting and if there were any public comments about non-agenda items. There was no response.

B. PAOLI PIKE CORRIDOR OVERLAY PROJECT

Traditional Neighborhood Development – 1 & 2

Goshenville Village Overlay Districts: TND-1 & 2

Brad introduced Tom Comitta and reviewed the purpose of the meeting. Tom reviewed what has been done in the last 2 meetings. He spoke about the uses in the districts. TND1 follows the current C2 district. Should TND1 & 2 overlay C2 or should they become the districts. He mentioned other municipalities he worked with and it was always an overlay. He mentioned that August 15, 2018 is the next meeting.

Tom mentioned that he recently met or talked to several developers including Brian McFadden, Hotel developer and Neil Fisher, Hankin Group. He introduced Neil Fisher of the Hankin Group who was present at this meeting.

Tom distributed copies of Section 7 Economic Development Strategy from the East Goshen Township Comprehensive Plan 2015. The graphic showed the Commercial Service Areas within a 2, 3 and 5-mile radius of East Goshen. This was the strategy for smaller retail. In 1991 – 1995 he worked with a committee in West Chester Borough and based on their findings, restaurants and small business would be best. He spoke about the Paoli Pike Trail, which will provide accessibility to Goshenville. Tom distributed a list of 6 uses for discussion at this meeting.

3.1 – Boutique Hotel – Neil Fisher mentioned the Hankin Group has 2 hotels and 1 more under construction. They looked into building one in Eagleview where they have 2.5 million sq.ft. of office space available. They thought a boutique hotel would be good so they went through the process with the township but decided not to build it. The hotel industry is driven by brand names and people go to them for the membership card perks. They did build a hotel at Route 100 and the PA Turnpike interchange. It has done well because it is a brand name. A boutique hotel is not something they would invest in for Goshenville. 40 years ago when New Kent Apartments was built there was no retail in the area, so they felt there would be enough demand for a small retail area in the complex. As retail grew in East Goshen, no one was utilizing this retail area, so they took it down and built 2 new apartment buildings.

Tom commented that Brian McFadden feels that because there is no significant interchange here, he didn't think there would be enough demand for a hotel.

Public comment - Dolores Higgins, 904 Vista Drive – There is a building across from the Historic Area that was a Bed & Breakfast. Their primary source of occupancy was Bellingham and QVC.

Neil commented that the hotel near Eagleview is business occupancy for the Exton area and is full during the week. Their hotels range in size from 130-145 units. He mentioned that if a hotel is busy during the weekend but not during the week, it is not economical. Also, you need to be in an area that is convenient for the workers to get to.

Tom mentioned that Jim Fuller also of the Hankin Group, commented that the Township Building (previous Genardi's building) would be good for residential if it closes. Neil commented that they struggle with the live/work units (retail on 1st floor, residential above). Eagleview town center is not on a main road. You have to find uses that are destination driven. He feels East Goshen is in a better situation for live/work units. Eagleview also hosts a lot of community events. He feels that would be successful in Goshenville. Tom commented that it was not difficult to remove some of the C2 uses such as gas stations but he left library as a use. Neil commented that it is a community use and Goshenville has government/community uses already.

Planning Commission Members Comments:

Dan – In this area there is a lot of residential on the perimeter. To develop this area do we need to bring in residential? Neil commented that in order to put capital into it, there has to be higher density to support it, so a mix of retail and offices would work.

Dan – Hankin owns property and has the staff to get people in. How will this work in Goshenville?

Neil commented that you have to set rules for developers in order to get the kind of use you want.

Incentives are important. Access through the trail connection will be good and encourage certain types of layouts. He has concern about the type of road Paoli Pike is now. There is a streetscape plan that could help to bring people here. He spoke about the difference between townships and boroughs.

Brad – The important decision is should it be an overlay or should it replace C2. Neil feels it should be an overlay of the C2. As a developer, he would look at both and select what works for him. Mark commented that if you go with an overlay, you have to think about the incentives. There are several residential overlays in the Township. The developers all went with the overlay incentives.

Adam – Why hasn't Hankin taken under utilized property? Neil commented that right now there is no incentive. If a developer can see the possibility of an increase in density and profit, then he may consider it. He spoke of density. West Whiteland Town Center ordinance allows a higher density but it is not defined. Parking is always a concern. East Goshen has no public transportation.

Dan – He is very familiar with West Whiteland Town Center. How do you handle higher density?

Neil - Garage parking is very expensive, but it is a way to handle the density.

Brad mentioned anchor uses. He feels there is no need for that here. Neil feels the restaurant is the new anchor. They are going to develop a 20 acre parcel in West Vincent which is much more rural than East Goshen. They designed a mix of residential and retail with retail closer to the highway. Residential will fill the retail. They will start with a mix and then add more retail.

Brad mentioned the younger generation. Neil feels the younger and older senior generations are looking for the same thing.

Jim – Are there other uses that could anchor? Neil mentioned Wegman's but the space in Goshenville is smaller. He feels we should have a village feeling.

Jim – At the southwest corner of Rt 352 and Paoli Pike, the properties are owned by 3 different owners. Neil commented that you need incentives for one person to try to take that whole corner. He mentioned that self-driving cars are coming and the demand for parking spaces will decrease in the future. In the meantime, an increase in building height and use of parking garages will help with the density.

Jim commented about buildings closer to the road and gaps in between the buildings. Neil cautioned about no parking in front of the buildings. He agrees with set backs. Brad mentioned that buildings near the road is viewed a traffic calming.

Silvia – She spoke about other town centers that have a variety of conveniences, which she can't see here. If you had all of the land here what would you do with it? Neil commented that there are 2 prime corners with Paoli Pike in between so it would be one town center. He sees it as event and small retail driven.

Connect with the people going to the school; ie, coffee shops, etc. He is a firm believer in events, which bring people in.

Brad explained the Perakis property and its history.

Neil mentioned that he did look at the area, which is surrounded by residential with access to both roads. They built manor homes in Eagleview, which is a mid-density property. It can provide some open space and give a great streetscape. Brad asked if he would consider commercial. Neil commented no, there would be too many obstacles especially the surrounding community, which would oppose it. He would do use by right since it is zoned residential. It can be a transitional in density – low density residential, mid-density manor homes to higher density town center.

Public Comments:

Janet Emanuel – In the beginning of the meeting boutique was mentioned. What kind of boutique do you see for this? Malvern has restaurants and boutique shops but she rarely sees people buying in the boutiques. Neil commented that the most obvious is restaurants, coffee shops, book store, fitness center (which is very popular now). There needs to be a market study done.

Dolores Higgins, 904 Vista Drive – She spoke about all the things that exist now in the area and the park, so other than the walkway, she is not sure what is needed. She thanked Neil for the recommendation of the residential manor homes.

Jim – He explained what could happen in the future and how to control future uses.

Neil commented that they always try to be proactive and he is glad the Township is doing this.

Marty Shane – There is no vacant land. There are several owners and the size is limited.

Neil – They also do redevelopment. They purchased a property that had a paper company on it and demolished the buildings to rebuild. When a retail property is not profitable, the owner does not reinvest and the property can decay. Marty mentioned that the Township takes up a lot of space with the two buildings. Is this an asset or not? Neil commented that the Township building is good in the town center. The maintenance building should be studied. Maybe there is another place for it. Mark Gordon commented that an option may be the corporate park. Brad feels the Township building gives a sense of identity. Neil mentioned that they need a maintenance building for Eagleview. They are looking for land outside of Eagleview because the property in Eagleview is too valuable for a maintenance facility.

Carroll Sinquett, 223 Green St., Malvern – He is on the board in Malvern. They have a maintenance building outside of the town center. They have retail with apartments above. How does parking work for redevelopment in West Whiteland? Neil mentioned that the Kmart closed and the building was demolished. Then the Whole Foods was built with a new streetscape into the Exton Mall. Areas around the Mall are redeveloping with increased density including residential.

Dolores Higgins – How many miles did they build the Hankin Library from Eagleview. Neil answered about 2 miles north but libraries are struggling now.

Marty Shane mentioned that East Goshen is part of the Malvern Library – about 25%. A library or book store would impact that. What about a community center?

Neil mentioned that Eagleview has 5 restaurants, which are all different so it is a destination for restaurants. He thinks restaurant row is a good idea. He is not sure about a community center since there is the Township building.

Kay Coup, 916 N. Chester Rd. – She has looked at other town centers and stores that have closed. In West Chester it is mostly restaurants, which is nice. If this develops, how long will it last? Neil commented that the developer will make the difference. They study every idea and look at it for the long term. So, if it isn't viable, they don't buy it. He likes the idea of Goshenville.

Kay doesn't want commercial in the Perakis property. She liked his response to that.

Brad thanked Neil very much for coming to the meeting. They appreciate his input.

Tom presented a gift of 2 books to Neil. They were the “Images of America”, East Goshen and Downingtown.

Tom mentioned that he was at a meeting today about repurposing commercial. He asked what the Commission wants for the August 15th meeting. Brad feels discussion and updates will be done in August. He told Tom not to do a 3rd draft yet.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Silvia moved to adjourn the meeting. Monica seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm. The next work shop meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 15, 2018 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted, _____
Ruth Kiefer, Recording Secretary