

**LOWER WINDSOR TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 23, 2023**

The Lower Windsor Township Planning Commission held its regular meeting in person at the Municipal Building located at 2425 Craley Road, Wrightsville, PA 17368. The meeting was called to order by Chair Julia Parrish at 6:30 p.m. Also present were Planning Commission members Hollis Bedell, Kelly Skiptunas, Marzena Wolnikowski, Rachel Sollenberger, and Zoning Officer, Monica Love. All attendees stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

MINUTES

Hollis Bedell made a motion to approve the minutes of February 23, 2023, with comments addressed from Julia Parrish, Kelly Skiptunas seconded. Motion passed 4-0. (Rachel Sollenberger was not seated with the members at this time)

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

ZHB CASE Z2023-01 – River Ranch Holding Co, LLC, 127 Abels Road, has requested a Special Exception for an event center with accommodation for overnight guests. Attorney Tom Nehilla and Rachel Sollenberger as a member of the River Ranch Holding Co, LLC presented the application. The property is located in the Village district but is adjacent to the Agricultural zone. The Village District permits the more intense uses, such as Club Rooms, Bed & breakfast, hotels and motels. The Ag district permits the Family Farm Support business, and under that, corporate events, company picnics, weddings and special events are permitted on working farms.

The dwelling at 127 Abels is an 1820s home on the National Historic Register. The owners plan to keep the décor to the timeframe, and have replaced the HVAC, sanded the floors, and painted, but that all takes money. Their desire is to bring the house back to its former glory.

The Sollenberger's farm is adjacent to this parcel. They have events there at this time under the family farm support business, and would like to move them to this lot, and include the availability of having overnight guests in the historic house. The events could be for 50 people inside the house, or outdoor gatherings of no more than 200 people. There is a barn on the property, but they are not renovating that at this time. It may be in the 10-year plan.

Outdoor events may have a tent, there will be a luxury outdoor portable toilet, which is under contract. Mr. and Mrs. Sollenberger will be on hand for each event, but they are only the hosts.

There is currently only a 1,200 gallon septic tank, which may limit the overnight guest number, and may also require pumping a couple times a year. Future replacement or addition of tanks may be implemented.

The house and the area to be used as part of the event center is outside the Special Flood Hazard Area.

The parking area was discussed; current ordinances require that any commercial/industrial use must provide a paved parking lot, and does not differentiate agritourism or agritainment uses. In the past, family farm uses, agritourism, and agritainment uses have not been required to provide paved parking areas. Mrs. Sollenberger noted there is paved parking at the garage. Staff recommends that the grass field parking area must be maintained to a dust-free, mud-free condition. Egress from the lot will be solely to Abels Road, and improvements will be made to increase the safety.

Booking at this time would be 1 wedding per weekend, no more than 4 per month. Mrs. Wolnikowski brought up that frequency of weddings may wear out the grass and require additional maintenance.

Alcohol may be provided by the event renter, who will have to maintain 'day of' liability insurance. No sale of alcohol will be permitted, but they can have a donation requested, but not required. All food will be catered. Refuse is disposed of by dumpster, which is already on site.

No explosive fireworks will be permitted. Entertainment and festivities will have to stop by 10 pm, with no amplification after 10pm. The language from the Marina Event Center should be added for language on the PA system.

The number of parking spaces for this type of use is 1 space for every 3 or 4 people, assuming 200 people, 50 - 67 spaces would be required. Mrs. Sollenberger noted that there is space for 200 cars.

Adjoining property owners were notified on March 13, regarding the meeting and the hearing. There was no one in the audience to speak on the application.

Mrs. Wolnikowski asked how the applicant can meet the Special Exception requirements which state the development will not decrease the value of any adjoining property. Mrs. Sollenberger stated that from the house, when the corn is fully grown, the houses along Calvary Church Road cannot be seen. Their intent is within the next 5 years, a landscaped buffer will be planted across the back of the houses that front on Calvary Church.

Dr. Bedell made a motion to recommend approval of the application, with the following conditions.

The current septic system shall be pumped every 3 months, or more often if needed.

The approval should be subject to the draft of the Short-Term Rentals Ordinance (attached).

The event center will need to meet the requirements of the Agritainment Noise Ordinance, and the Applicant shall include and retain language in its standard events contract that expressly prohibits any obscenities or offensive language being stated or broadcast over the PA system during any event on the property.

The unpaved parking area must be maintained to a mud-free, dust-free surface.

Screening is required to meet Sec. 470-39 of the Zoning Ordinance along the Calvary Church Road properties and shall be 6' high within 2 years.

As proposed by the applicant, on exhibit A, Condition 4 Property Owner shall maintain commercial general liability insurance and its customers shall obtain general liability insurance, including host liquor liability, for events held at the property at which alcoholic beverages will be served.

Mrs. Wolnikowski seconded the motion which passed 3 to 1.

ZHB CASE Z2023-02 – Steve Kaufhold, at 26 New Bridgeville Rd has requested a variance of Sec. 470-110.B of the Zoning Ordinance, to permit chickens on a property less than 5 acres (deminimus) and to construct the coop less than 50 feet from the property line. Mr. and Mrs. Kaufhold have 4.72 acres (5.0 acres required), and the area for the coop is 150' from the nearest house. There is a fence in place, which is intended to remain, but will need to be repaired.

There will be no roosters. They are proposing to have 15 chickens (3 breeds, 5 of each). There will be a large run for the chickens, with a roof over it to protect the chickens.

There is electric service and water available at this area of the lot, the wooded part of the lot is unsuitable for the chickens, there are fox and hawks in the area. The immediately adjacent property is farmed, and another has an open grass yard.

Dr. Bedell motioned to recommend the Zoning Hearing Board grant the variance, subject to staff recommendation of no more than 20 chickens, the tree screening and fence must be maintained as long as there are chickens, and the seepage trench is required to be installed for stormwater management.

Mrs. Sollenberger seconded the motion, which passed 5 – 0.

ZHB CASE Z2023-03 – Daryl Shupp, 330 Pleasant Hill Road, is requesting a variance of the front setback requirement of the Agricultural district for a pole building. The existing right-of-way of Pleasant Hill Road is 16.5' from the centerline, and the setback is 35' feet from the right-of-way line. The side and rear setbacks are 5', which he can meet. The main structures were built well before the 2004 adoption of the zoning ordinance. There is a drainage ditch that limits how far back the accessory structure can be placed. Mr. Shupp says he can be 30' from the centerline of the road, which is still behind the building line of his house and the neighboring house.

Dr. Bedell made a motion to recommend the Zoning Hearing Board grant the variance for the front setback to be reduced from 35' to 13.5'.

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Monica Love
Zoning Officer