

Greenwich Township Planning Commission Meeting
Monday, June 19, 2023

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Chairman Michael Stevens called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Members present: Michael Stevens, Ken Sanner, Scott Anders, Richard Wood. Professionals present: Colin Macfarlane from Kozloff Stoudt P.C. and Administrator, Diane Hollenbach.

Guest: Andrew Dietrich, Fred Germann, Dodie Sable, Marc Sable, Kay Brendlinger, Angelo Corrado, Calvin Odhner, Margaret Odhner

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Chairman Stevens asked the audience to state their name and address if addressing the Commission. This meeting will be recorded for the accuracy of the minutes and deleted. Before speaking please be aware that attending visitors may also be recording the meeting without your knowledge.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

A motion was made by Mr. Sanner, seconded by Mr. Wood, to approve the minutes of the May 15, 2023 Planning Commission Meeting as presented. All members present voted in favor. Motion carried.

HEARING OF THE VISITORS:

Angelo Corrado representing Lynn and Candace Edwards of 89 Wiltrout Road explained that their property had been subdivided years ago, and the Edwards would like to build a home on lot 1 that is more suited to their age and health and sell their son the house at 89 Wiltrout Road. Mr. Corrado estimated the cost of installing a driveway on lot 1 to be between \$35,000 and \$65,000. He asked to be allowed to connect to the existing driveway for 89 Wiltrout Road. Mr. Macfarlane stated that Mr. Corrado is really asking for a waiver to the driveway ordinance which should come before the Board of Supervisors and not the Planning Commission. Mr. Macfarlane added that the plan that subdivided the property allowed for a shared driveway as long as the lots remained in common ownership but lot 1 had transferred to Michael Edwards. Mr. Stevens suggested that the homeowner had options within township regulations such as a temporary trailer or building in law quarters onto the home at 89 Wiltrout Road.

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT STATUS:

Subdivision and Land Development Status Report- All plans were current and no plans were received for review.

NEW BUSINESS

Planning Commission Report on the Conditional Use Application of Calvin and Margaret Odhner

Mr. Macfarlane explained Mr. and Mrs. Odhner applied for a conditional use to rent out rooms in their home through Air BNB. The Odhners also obtained permits for two yurts and would like to rent them out to short term guests as well. That matter will be heard by the Zoning Hearing Board. Township regulations on conditional use proceedings require the Planning Commission to issue a report with their recommendation and any conditions on allowing short term rental of rooms in the Odhners' home.

Mr. Odhner stated that they had been living in the farmhouse at 108 Little Roundtop Road since 1998 and renting out three rooms to guests since 2020. The property is about ten acres, and there are no close neighbors. Mr. Odhner stated he rents each room to a no more than two adults. Sometimes there is a child in the room as well. There is no hunting allowed on the property but the renters have access to the fire pit and hot tub. The

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rooms are available for rent year round with the summer being the busiest time. Guests check themselves in using a code for the front door. A cleaning service cleans after every rental. The rental fee is kept on the high side and this has kept unruly guests to a minimum. Guests are screened in advance, and the Odhners have the right to refuse rental to any guest. Mr. Odhner explained that Air BNB has a resolution system that handles problems between owners and guests and also has a one million dollar liability policy. The Odhners also live on the property and move into the summer house if a guest asks to rent the entire house.

A motion was made by Mr. Sanner, seconded by Mr. Anders, based on the representation made by of the owners of 108 Little Roundtop Road, recommending approval of the conditional use for short term rental of the home on the property with the following conditions: there should be no more than two adults per room, there should be maintenance and cleaning of the rooms after each use, there should be compliance with all state and local laws, rules and regulations and the rooms shall be rented for no longer than a seven (7) day maximum stay. All members present voted in favor. Motion carried.

Joint Planning Commission Meeting – Mr. Wood updated the Commission on the meeting he attended in May regarding the joint comprehensive plan for the municipalities in the Kutztown Area School District. Lyons Borough has decided not to participate. The Berks County Planning Commission gave a presentation on the housing shortage and affordable housing issues. 800 farms which total sixty percent of all land in the county is in agricultural preservation. In a ten year span the average cost of a home went from \$134,000 in 2013 to \$215,000 in 2023 but an average person can only afford to pay \$175,000 for a home. The Kutztown and Brandywine school districts have budget shortfalls of \$500,000 to \$600,000 for both school systems. The county is interested in joint comprehensive plans and what can follow is joint zoning to solve these housing issues. Mr. Wood stated it was good to talk with people from other townships and felt the joint comprehensive plan overall was a good idea and recommended we stay involved. Mrs. Hollenbach explained the funding formula was being looked at and a grant was being applied for that would cover half the cost of the plan. Mr. Stevens commented a problem is the disproportionate funding of school district and that he has long thought there should be one school district per county. Mr. Wood said school consolidation was mentioned.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion made by Mr. Anders, seconded by Mr. Sanner, to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 pm. All members voted in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Diane Hollenbach, Administrator/Secretary/Treasurer