

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
BOROUGH OF TRAPPE PLANNING COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 17, 2015**

Brett Yeagley called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:30 P.M. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call was made. Present were Brett Yeagley, Matthew Caffrey; Jeffrey Rahm; Bob Swartley; Council Liaison, Tammy Liberi and Mary Ann Lowie of Gilmore Associates. Commission member Steve Kurcik entered part way thru the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Member Brett Yeagley made a motion, seconded by Member Jeffrey Rahm to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2014 meeting. The motion was approved 4-0.

COMMISSION REORGANIZATION:

Matthew Caffrey made a motion, seconded by Jeffrey Rahm to appoint Brett Yeagley as Chairman. Motion carried 4-0.

Brett Yeagley made a motion, seconded by Matthew Caffrey, to appoint Jeffrey Rahm as Vice Chairman. Motion carried 4-0.

STEARLY SUBDIVISION:

In 2007, the Borough approved the subdivision of the Stearly Subdivision into 31 residential lots. The property has not yet been developed. Ben Goldthrop, representing American Real Estate Development, approached the Planning Commission seeking to amend the plan approved in 2007. His proposal would involve the reduction of the size of a number of the lots and the addition of two additional residential lots. Mr. Goldthrop explained that the dwelling units were being reduced in order to meet the current market demands.

Mary Ann Lowie of Gilmore Associates indicated that their firm had been asked to review the plans on an informal basis, since the developer did not submit a formal plan. They had come up with a number of issues which they were recommending be considered.

Borough Manager Robert Layman expressed a concern that the re-subdivision could not be effected by the amendment process being suggested by the applicant. He indicated that the Borough Solicitor seemed to be of the same thought. But that in order to get a definitive reading said he would speak with the County Planning Commission.

Jeffrey Rahm made a motion, seconded by Bob Swartley, to recommend that the proposed development be allowed to move forward, conditioned on the satisfaction of those items in the review letter from Gilmore Associates and the determination of the proper procedure for handling the requested change. Motion approved 4-0.

MORTGAGE SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE:

Bill Anderson of Longview Development, the owners of the Trappe Center spoke to the Commission membership in support of the proposed ordinance. He indicated that due to the changed financial environment, allowing for a mortgage subdivision would create better financing opportunities necessary for upgrading the shopping center. The tenants' who would obtain the financing would be able to obtain more money and at better terms than the ownership of the Center as a whole could. He did admit that if one of the shops went into bankruptcy, the Center would be limited in what it could do, but that the ordinance was important in keeping the businesses viable.

Jeffrey Rahm made a motion, seconded by Bob Swartley, to recommend approval of the proposed ordinance. The motion was approved 4-0.

SIGN ORDINANCE:

Borough Council Liaison Tammy Liberi opened the discussion of the draft sign ordinance, a copy of which had been provided to the membership of the Borough Planning Commission. Previously, this had been reviewed by the Borough's Planning, Zoning and Ordinance Committee. Among the changes that have been made include the definitions of the banner, circulation sign, monument sign, special event sign and the elimination of parallel sign on pages 2-7 of the ordinance. Other changes include regulations on Freestanding Signs, Wall and Projecting Signs, Circulation Signs, Event Signs, Sandwich Board Signs, and Real Estate Signs.

An extended discussion was undertaken on Section 340-75 Nonconforming Signs. Specifically, Subsection B (1) states that should a sign be more than 50% damaged, it shall be repaired to conform to the requirement of the ordinance. Bob Swartley stated that he did not feel that a sign owner should not be penalized by an act of God and that they should be allowed to return it to its original condition.

Tammy Liberi noted that if a motion was made to alter the ordinance as drafted was made; she would need to take it back to the Planning, Zoning and Ordinance Committee.

Jeff Rahm made a motion, seconded by Bob Swartley, to recommend the approval of the proposed Sign Ordinance with the condition that Section 340-75 B and D be altered to allow signs that are damaged to be restored to their original condition. Motion approved 5-0.

Mark Douglas a resident of Betcher Road noted that there has been some activity taking place on the Wismar Farm. There have been surveyors on the property. Trees have been removed. At the same time, the property has been eased to protect from development. The owner has not approached the Borough with any plans for any other use of the land. The Secretary was directed to note the activities on the ground in the minutes.

There being no further business, Matthew Caffrey made a motion, and seconded by Bob Swartley to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 p.m. Motion approved 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Layman
Acting Secretary