

JULY 6, 2011

The Plymouth Township Planning Agency held a public meeting at the Plymouth Township Building on Wednesday, July 6, 2011.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The following were present:

Clem Monacelli	Chairman
Steven Hart	Vice Chairman
Kelly Isett	Agency Secretary
Dominic Aprile	Member
Dee Mellor	Member
Gregory Ensslin	Member
Jeffrey Branagh	Member
Frank Watton	Member

Beth Abramovitz	T&M Associates
David Conroy	Zoning Officer

The Agency heard the following:

#### INTERCHANGE DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT - TEXT AMENDMENT

Mr. Kenneth Amey was present to discuss the Text Amendment for the Interchange Development District. Craig Robert Lewis, Esq. was also present.

Mr. Amey advised that he serves Plymouth Township as its Professional Planner. Mr. Amey stated that the applicant has been in discussion with Brandywine Realty concerning a property on Plymouth Road. Mr. Amey advised that this applicant made a parking presentation before the Planning Agency in December 2010.

Mr. Amey advised that the Township and Brandywine Realty have been working together on a Text Amendment for the Interchange Development District that would protect the surrounding area after an apartment complex goes in. Mr. Amey stated that careful thought was given to new regulations that will assure that the applicant's plan will work for the area.

Mr. Amey advised that the plan proposes an apartment complex in the Interchange Development District. Mr. Amey stated that residential use currently is not allowed in this District. Mr. Amey advised that a new subset for conditional use is proposed so that a midrise apartment

complex would be allowed in the Interchange Development District under certain criteria.

Mr. Amey advised that the density would be downgraded to a minimum 15 units per acre. Mr. Amey stated that credits will be given to floodplains and steep slopes. Mr. Amey advised that a density bonus could be rewarded from 1 to 5 additional units per acre. Mr. Amey stated that a table is set up to show sustainable design initiatives that will allow this increase in density.

Mr. Amey advised that the apartments will not have more than two bedrooms. Mr. Amey stated that 50% of the units will only have one bedroom. Mr. Amey advised that the tract will be subject to open space requirements and off-street parking regulations. Mr. Amey stated that there will be reserved parking.

Mr. Amey advised that the area is subject to pedestrian design standards. Mr. Amey stated that architectural guidelines will be in place for all buildings. Mr. Amey advised that the specific signage will not be excessive.

Mr. Amey advised that the proposed Ordinance was reviewed by Montgomery County, and their comments were incorporated into the draft submitted. Mr. Amey stated that it is a good fit for the applicant's project, and will provide much potential for Plymouth Township.

Chairman Monacelli asked how the maximum height of 75 feet is derived. Mr. Amey advised that 5 stories totaling 60 feet is allowed. Mr. Amey stated that there could be some parking underneath the apartments, and therefore the 75 feet maximum for height is derived.

Chairman Monacelli asked if building materials will be restricted to masonry stone. Mr. Amey advised that there is not the restriction to masonry stone, however the applicant will comply with all building standards for construction.

Mr. Lewis advised that he represents Brandywine Realty. Mr. Lewis stated that Brandywine did their initial presentation in December 2010. Mr. Lewis advised that Township Staff, Township Council, and the Township Engineer have come up with a proposal which will be compatible with the site in question, and what Brandywine proposes for the site.

Member Branagh asked what amendments in the proposed Ordinance are less restrictive. Mr. Amey advised that he believes the only less restrictive amendment is for the lesser parking spaces. Member Branagh asked why are two entrance signs needed. Mr. Amey stated that this may be needed because it may be a boulevard street, and a sign would go on each side of the boulevard.

Member Branagh asked if the height of the sign is being increased from 8 feet to 10 feet. Mr. Amey advised that this is correct, however Brandywine had initially proposed an even higher height for signage. Member Branagh inquired about the minimum setback being changed from 25 feet to 15 feet. Mr. Amey stated that this is for the site only.

Member Branagh asked if the Ordinance can include building code requirements so that methods such as a tremendous amount of woodframing would not be allowed. Mr. Amey advised that this is a separate issue that would have to be appealed through the State.

Member Ensslin commented that he agrees that he would not desire to see a structure that large having so much woodframing.

Member Ensslin asked why are more dwelling units being allowed with the point system submitted. Mr. Amey advised that the original proposal was for 25 units per acre. Mr. Amey stated that it was felt that this was excessive, however if sustainable elements are provided then a higher density is allowed.

Member Ensslin asked if there have been any traffic studies done on how the proposal would impact the area. Mr. Amey advised that there will be less traffic impact with a midrise apartment complex than with an office development. Mr. Amey stated that this will be documented.

Member Ensslin inquired about off-street parking. Mr. Amey advised that all parking at the site will be off-street parking.

Member Ensslin asked if a covenant exists if 50% of the area is sold off. Mr. Amey advised that further subdivision would provide for a mortgage subdivision for a separate parcel. Mr. Amey stated that one association would be responsible for maintenance.

Member Ensslin asked if the proposed is an addendum to the existing uses. Mr. Amey advised that the property should always remain Interchange Zoning. Mr. Amey stated that the Township feels that there should be some stipulation for residential because of what is implied in the Comprehensive Plan.

Member Ensslin asked if there is a precedent for allowing dual use zoning. Mr. Amey advised that mixed use zoning is very common.

Member Aprile inquired about the maximum number of units and size of the tract. Mr. Amey advised that the size of the tract is in the range of 15-17 acres. Mr. Amey stated that there would be a maximum of 350 units in the apartment complex.

Member Aprile asked if roads will still need to be developed even though midrise apartment would generate less traffic than office use. Mr. Amey advised that this would be reviewed as part of the conditional use. Ms. Abramovitz stated that Penndot will require the widening of certain roads.

Member Aprile commented that the apartments would generate traffic 24 hours per day while office would generate traffic 12 hours per day. Mr. Amey advised that there was a lot of discussion concerning what will be required to address traffic. Mr. Amey stated that this is why Penndot is requiring the widening of roads.

Member Hart asked who will oversee the guidelines submitted. Mr. Amey advised that the Township Engineer, T&M Associates, will certify so that guidelines will be followed. Ms. Abramovitz stated that it will be documented what is being installed.

Member Mellor commented that she agrees that inspection is needed for the sustainable design initiatives. Member Mellor advised that verification is needed because more dwellings will go in.

Chairman Monacelli inquired about preferred parking for hybrid vehicles at 1% of total parking capacity. Chairman Monacelli stated that maybe there should be an increase to 10%, or it be dropped to .25%. Ms. Abramovitz advised that there are different methods to come up with a parking figure for these vehicles. Ms. Abramovitz stated that the points system is used in the Sustainable Design Initiative Table.

Member Aprile stated that Chairman Monacelli seems to want to see more parking spaces per dwelling units instead of 1%. Ms. Abramovitz stated that the point scale can determine credit.

Member Mellor asked if the amendment could read that the applicant could be required a variety of sustainable design initiatives for more density. Ms. Abramovitz stated that Township Council has a right to advise if they do not like what the applicant is proposing for initiatives. Mr. Amey advised that Township Council will have the discretion to incorporate higher value. Member Mellor stated that she would like to see specification for mixed use for sustainable initiatives in the amendment. Mr. Amey stated that another amendment may be needed down the road for sustainable initiatives because the Township is treading on new ground.

Member Ensslin asked if there is any other area in the Township that will be subject to this proposed amendment. Mr. Amey advised that only the property in question would be subject to the requirements of the amendment.

Member Aprile inquired about a developable space of area. Mr. Amey advised that he believes that this would be an area of about 15 to 60 acres. Mr. Amey stated that the area of the property backing up to the Blue Route is included in developable space despite the slopes that are present.

Member Hart asked if the same values go throughout the property concerning developable space. Mr. Amey advised that density is based on developable area. Member Branagh asked if floodplains are included in developable area. Mr. Amey stated that floodplain can be included as open area.

Chairman Monacelli inquired about construction waste management. Ms. Abramovitz advised that recycling can take place.

There were comments and questions from the audience.

Mr. Philip Harris, 143 Plymouth Road, advised that he is just beginning to learn about this project. Mr. Harris stated that he is disappointed that residents were not brought into the loop earlier.

Mr. Harris advised that he is intrigued by the Township proposing environmental friendly requirements. Mr. Harris stated that he is concerned about apartment size and compliance for incentives. Mr. Harris advised that there will be different size apartments. Mr. Harris stated that the cost of renting the apartments may go up because of the environmental changes.

Mr. Harris advised that he is concerned about traffic. Mr. Harris stated that the situation was helped somewhat by the work done at Plymouth Road and Butler Pike, however the problem has not gone away completely. Mr. Harris advised that the 340 apartment units could bring over 500 cars to the area.

Mr. Harris advised that the transportation studies are critical. Mr. Harris stated that the impact of the development must not be underestimated. Chairman Monacelli advised that the Agency is most concerned about traffic, and this will be reviewed at Land Development.

Member Hart commented that the apartments may not all be small depending on how many floors are constructed. Mr. Amey advised that this will depend on the mix that the builder chooses. Member Hart stated that it seems that the more credits that are earned the more density can go on an acre. Mr. Amey stated that the Ordinance stipulates that 50% of the units must be one bedroom or studio.

Ms. Ellen Harris, 143 Plymouth Road, advised that she would like to see the master plan for how the remaining open area will be developed. Ms. Harris stated that there is traffic on Plymouth Road all day long.

Ms. Harris advised that there are a lot of nice Victorian houses on Plymouth Road. Ms. Harris expressed concern where animals will go if a new apartment complex is put in. Ms. Harris stated that animals will crowd on tiny pieces of property.

Ms. Harris asked if Plymouth Township is a Township for living or a Township to make more money. Chairman Monacelli noted that the Comprehensive Plan went in about 20 years ago to give direction on development for the different areas of the Township.

Mr. Conroy advised that Township Council has discussed updating the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Amey stated that the Comprehensive Plan shows Plymouth Road in the Interchange Development District. Ms. Abramovitz advised that direction is given so that development takes place on one tract, and the tract with the wooded area stays the same.

Member Branagh noted that the original Ordinance had stipulated 50% open space. Mr. Amey advised that the Ordinance was reviewed in order to accommodate open space for the Interchange Development District.

Mr. Rick Slack, 151 Plymouth Road, advised that he owns a rental property on Plymouth Road. Mr. Slack advised that improvements are needed if an apartment complex goes in.

Mr. Slack asked if the public sewer from the apartment complex can run all of the way out to the residential homes. Mr. Amey advised that public sewer will be reviewed and addressed at the Land Development Process. Mr. Amey stated that there would be an effort to extend the sewer.

Mr. Slack inquired about the apartment rental rate. Mr. Amey advised that the Township would have no control over the rental rate. Mr. Lewis stated that the rental rate would be probably over \$1,000 because of the upscale nature of the project. Mr. Slack advised he would like to see nice rental properties. Mr. Lewis stated that young professionals and empty nesters would be attracted to the apartments.

Mr. Brendan Smith advised that he lives nearby in Whitemarsh Township. Mr. Smith stated that he is concerned about additional traffic the apartment complex may bring, and the Traffic Study will be very important.

Member Branagh asked if Whitemarsh Township had any comment when the proposal was initially submitted. Mr. Conroy advised that Whitemarsh Township submitted a review letter indicating that they had no concerns about the project.

Mr. Harris asked if the Comprehensive Plan takes into account the residential properties on Plymouth Road. Mr. Harris noted that these residences are in between development properties. Chairman Monacelli stated that the Township has grown because of the Turnpike and Blue Route, and there is very little open space left at all. Mr. Conroy advised that residents can look at the Comprehensive Plan to determine where the line is for the Interchange Development District.

Chairman Monacelli made a motion that the Agency recommend that the Text Amendment for the Interchange Development District be approved subject to the following:

- 1) Relook at the numeric values of the LEED requirements.

Member Hart seconded the motion. Members Monacelli, Hart, Isett, Watton, and Mellor voted in favor of the motion. Members Aprile, Ensslin, and Branagh voted against the motion. The motion passed by the vote of 5-3.

#### REVIEW OF MINUTES (6-8-11)

Member Mellor made a motion that the 6-8-11 minutes be approved. Chairman Monacelli seconded the motion. The 6-8-11 minutes were approved by an unanimous vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Richard Clifford*  
Richard Clifford