

# Upper Gwynedd Township

## Planning Commission

P. O. BOX #1 ● WEST POINT, PA. 19486

**March 5, 2018**

The February 5, 2018 Planning Commission Meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm. In attendance were:

John Lancaster	Vice Chairman
John Klein	Secretary
Gilbert Silverman	Member
John Tierney	Member
Kathryn Carlson	Member
Christopher Carroll	Member
E. Van Rieker	Zoning Officer
Colleen Tronoski	Recording Secretary

### **1. Call to Order**

The March 2018 Planning Commission was called to order by Mr. Lancaster at 7:30 pm.

### **2. Approval of Minutes of February 5, 2018**

Mr. Lancaster asked for any questions relative to the Minutes of February 2018, which had been circulated by email. Mrs. Carlson suggested a correction be made. Mr. Silverman made a motion to approve the Minutes. Mr. Tierney seconded, and the motion was unanimously passed to approve the Minutes of February 5, 2017 with noted correction.

### **3. Report of Commissioners Meetings**

Mr. Santi reported that Robert Pro from the Police Department was honored for 10 years at the Police Department. Officer Steve Gillen was voted officer of the year. There was a motion made to approve two walks/runs within the Township for this upcoming summer. One is The Dash Against Domestic Violence and the other is a Wish Them Well Walk. This walk helps African woman who must walk miles to get water. The Board approved the purchase of four different pieces of highway equipment. This was approved in the budget. They authorized the advertisement of the pickleball court lighting. The golf outing contract was approved at Cedarbrook. The Board approved a Resolution for the Valley Forge Pump Station Land Development. The Township and Septa approved an agreement regarding the lines for the Valley Forge Road Pump Station that will run down to the Township Wastewater Treatment Plant noting the lines will cross under the railroad tracks.

### **4. Old Business**

#### **A. Enclave at Gwynwood Farm**

Dave Caracausa introduced himself. He noted that The Planning Commission has seen this plan before. This property is on West Prospect Avenue and a little over 6 acres currently and zoned R-1. Mr. Caracausa is proposing to build 4 lots with 4 single family homes. The plan includes a common driveway so that there's only 2 driveway cuts on West Prospect Avenue. These common driveways then split into separate driveways to each home. He noted extensive landscaping is planned along the frontage of the property. Each lot is approximately 1 ½ acre. Mr. Caracausa stated that he was present to talk about some of the waivers and some of the things The HOA will be covering.

Mr. Caracausa noted the following waivers –

1. West Prospect Avenue is an existing street, in the subdivision/land development Ordinance, it notes that if a street that new lots front on, it should have a 30-foot cart way. West Prospect has a 26-foot cart way. Mr. Caracausa is asking for a waiver to keep this existing cart way.

2. A preliminary and final approval of the plan
3. In the Ordinance, there is a section that talks about the width of a lot compared to the depth. These lots exceed the recommended depth
4. 168-21-0 and 168-21-P waivers for the common driveway and 6-foot separation for the common driveway
5. Curbing, road widening and sidewalks on West Prospect

Mr. Caracausa stated that his engineer has met with the Township engineer and reviewed the T&M letter and they have come to conclusion on every item in the letter. So, they will comply or come to a resolution as to how the items should be handled.

Mr. Caracausa stated that the HOA will oversee the landscaping across the frontage. They will also handle the common area of the driveway. This includes snow removal, upkeep and maintenance. The HOA will also handle the water management, swale and plantings in this area. Also, the individual basins. Mr. Silverman asked if there would be a board for this HOA. Mr. Caracausa stated that there would be an individual from each household on the board. The HOA would become a deed restriction on the property so HOA documents that set forth rules and regulations get recorded as part of the property.

Mr. Klein noted some page number mistakes. He then noted a concern with the subdivision/land development ordinance 168-21-P. This states that common driveways are prohibited. There is nothing on the plan about a waiver for this. Mr. Klein pointed out the waiver approval for 168-21-O, which had to do with the 6-foot separation on the previous plan. Mr. Caracausa stated he still needs the 6-foot separation because of the common driveway. Mr. Klein pointed out that the southern part of the property has sidewalks and curbs. He recommends that they be continued up in front of this property. Mr. Klein pointed out an error in the T&M letter (page 4). The letter states that at the February 5<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission Meeting, the Planning Commission recommended granting this waiver. This is incorrect. The Planning Commission did not.

Mr. Rieker noted that T&M did notice on item 35 (page 5) the waiver that's required 168-21-P.

Mr. Caracausa then asked for recommendation on the waivers.

Mr. Klein recommended denying the waivers on the sidewalks and the common driveways.

Mr. Caracausa noted that having the common driveway was based on only having 2 additional curb cuts on West Prospect Avenue.

Mr. Caracausa then asked for recommendation for approval and the waivers.

Mr. Klein made a motion to approve the plan and waivers only conditionally with the sidewalks being continued and no common driveway and compliance with the T&M letter. Mr. Silverman seconded this motion. There was discussion. Mr. Lancaster asked the Board for a vote.

Mr. Lancaster asked for a show of hands for this motion. The vote was 2-3. Mr. Lancaster stated that the vote did not carry.

Mr. Tierney made a motion to amend the previous motion with the conditions in the T&M letter, not to recommend the common driveway but to eliminate the requirement for the sidewalk extension. Mr. Carroll seconded this motion. Mr. Lancaster asked for a show of hands for this motion. The vote was 3-2.

**5. New Business**

**A. Proposed Two-Lot Subdivision  
209 Morris Road**

Mr. Caracausa presented a minor subdivision plan. The property is approximately 2.5 acres. Currently the existing building on the property has public sewer and water. The property is zoned R-2. It has road frontage on Morris Road and Old Morris Road dead ends into the property. The property is a rectangular shape with 160 feet in width x 606 feet depth. The proposal is to subdivide the property into 2 lots. The front would be for the existing residence and the rear lot, would be a flag lot and would take access off Old Morris Road. The plan would be a 1 single family detached home between 2400-2700 sq. ft.

**Neighbors Offered the Following Comments:**

Kathie Ellzey – 205 Old Morris Road – is concerned about emergency management services and how they would access that home.

Mr. Caracausa stated that the Fire Marshal did a site visit and one of the concerns he had was a fire hydrant location. He'd like one placed closer at the end of Old Morris Road. The driveway will be 12 feet wide instead of 10 feet and be held to 75 feet in case of an emergency for emergency equipment. The turning radius will also be increased. Mrs. Ellzey asked how far would Old Morris Road be extended? Mr. Caracausa stated that where Old Morris Road ends currently, would be the entrance of the new driveway. Mrs. Ellzey is also concerned with people not realizing that Old Morris Road is a dead end and continue into the new driveway believing they are still on the road. She is also questioning the berm and if it will need PENNDOT approval.

Jim Ellzey – 205 Old Morris Road – is concerned with the trees coming down and the carbon footprint being left. He would also would like the driveway on the other side of the garage going out to Morris Road.

Adam Mukerji – 263 Acorn Lane – is concerned with the trees and wildlife. He also stated that Acorn Lane has a water problem. He said that his back yard is a swamp and removing trees will make it worse.

Sandra Hawley – 756 North Wales Road – asked what environmental factors have you considered in digging up the ground back there?

Mr. Caracausa stated that they have completed infiltration testing that deals with the storm water so they're building in accordance with the soils that are there. Ms. Hawley asked if soil testing has been done. Mr. Caracausa noted that it was for the infiltration testing. Ms. Hawley asked what the content of the soil was. Mr. Caracausa noted that this testing was not done.

Chris Wagner – 267 Acorn Lane – believes this house will be an eyesore. He also noted a water problem and that back yards are soaked. He questioned where wildlife would move to.

Mr. Silverman stated that a site review was conducted and one of the points they brought up was the runoff towards the back of the property going towards Acorn Lane.

Boris Cheskis – 259 Acorn Lane – suggested not to make decision on one house but he heard that more houses are coming in a subdivision. He asked what strategies the Township has regarding this piece of nature. He also suggested before moving forward with this house then the next, that the resident's voices are heard.

Richard Decembrino – 768 North Wales Road – does not want house built on this plot of land. He believes it will ruin the Woods and view. He also thinks this piece of land is too small since its only 160 feet.

Jerry Sag – 224 Acorn Lane – stated that when it rains he can see 2 rivers coming down 2 properties'. In the winter it freezes. Building this house will make it worse.

Shree Chatterjee – 273 Acorn Lane – Noted that Mr. Caracausa said he was going to cut some trees down that weren't healthy, so the rest of the trees would thrive. How does he know that? Also, taking trees down would make the water problem worse.

Mr. Lancaster stated that Mr. Caracausa can not increase water flow when he develops the property according to the Ordinance.

Kathie Ellzey – 205 Old Church Road – asked why the driveway must run along her property and out to Morris Road.

Mr. Caracausa – stated that they looked into having the driveway come out to Morris Road but decided against it because its dangerous.

Mike Hickey – 770 North Wales Road – asked where the sewer would be tied in at. Mr. Caracausa pointed out the sewer lines out.

Cynthia Raieta – 279 Acorn Lane – stated that she also has a water problem and her yard is a moat when it rains. She doesn't believe a drain basin would be able to manage. She asked if these homes were in a flood plain? Mr. Rieker stated no.

Mr. Lancaster wanted to thank the Townships special needs registry. The other night his family received a phone call from the police department to insure his family was safe. He is on the registry for his special needs daughter. Because of the storm wanted to make sure they had electricity. Wanted to thank the Upper Gwynedd Police Department.

## **6. Adjournment**

There being no further business for discussion, Mr. Lancaster asked for any further questions or comments. Upon hearing none, Mr. Tierney made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Carroll and unanimously passed. The meeting was adjourned at 9:20PM.

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Klein". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

John Klein  
Secretary