

**Swatara Township Planning Commission**  
**August 6, 2020**

Board Members in attendance were Terry Brandt, Dean Patches, Steve Steiner and Jeff Werner. Also, in attendance were Colleen Gallo of Reilly Wolfson and Marty Sowers with Light-Heigel.

Jeff Werner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Werner took a few moments to comment on the recent loss of two members of our professional staff; Eric Powell, Light-Heigel and Joe Strauch, Gannett Fleming. Their contributions to the Township were commended because it is the input of individuals that make a community. As a community we all benefit from the impact of the individuals that came before us.

Mr. Werner had sent a letter to the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission as a discussion starter for today's meeting regarding his views on the need to change zoning to better reflect the needs of the community. That letter is included in the minute book.

#### Minutes

Mr. Werner asked those in attendance if there were any corrections to the minutes from the last meeting. With no corrections, the minutes stand approved as printed.

#### Land Development Plan

##### Linford Snyder Poultry Land Development Plan – Dead End Road

Steve Steiner moved to accept the Linford Snyder Poultry Land Development plan for review. Seconded by Terry Brandt. All voted in favor; motion carried.

The unique layout of this parcel was discussed, particularly the access lane. After an initial review of the proposed plan, the planning commission determined they would like to see better access to Greble Road to and from the poultry houses. Discussion was held regarding various options to make the access to this farm easier and safer.

#### OLD BUSINESS

##### In Home Businesses

Currently the ordinance states all In Home Businesses must be in the home and cannot be in an accessory structure. This requirement is proving to be limiting and the planning commission is looking for functional alternatives.

After extensive discussion the concept of establishing In Home Businesses in an accessory structure as a Conditional Use was deemed favorable. The uses will be limited based upon the zoning district. At least one definition will need to be added, at this time. A definition for Home Based Businesses will need to be established.

Section 27-1405.1 will be modified. Subsection B may be added to:

- B.1. Home occupations in accessory buildings will be allowed by Conditional Use.
- B.2. Home occupations in accessory buildings will be allowed with expansion beyond 25% of the primary residence or exceeding 750 sq. as long as all zoning setbacks can be met.

Other items which may be included in Conditional Use requirements will be a limit on the use being allowed to only coincide with the requester's ownership of the property. Conditions will also be established on a case by case basis depending on each property's unique circumstances.

A brief discussion was held regarding the zoning map and the reason behind the location of various zoning districts.

Mr. Sowers has received an e-mail inquiring if the Township might be agreeable to rezoning a significant portion of the Township Agricultural District to Commercial. Discussion was held. The matter is being referred to the Board of Supervisors since an official request has not been received.

#### Commercial Uses in the Agricultural Zone

There has been increased interest in allowing commercial uses in other zoning districts. A recommendation was made for a section to be include in the Agricultural District to allow any of the permitted uses as listed in 27-1102.1 – the Commercial District. The zoning requirements would still need to be met for Commercial Uses to be allowed in the Agricultural District.

In the R-1 District, it was proposed that, Commercial Uses would be allowed by Conditional Use as long as the property can meet a minimum lot size, such as 5 acres.

#### Pet Chickens

Discussion was held that based upon a recent court case which deemed chickens to be pets under certain circumstances, the wording in an ordinance can lead to unintended outcomes. This matter will be discussed further at the next planning commission meeting.

#### Revised Zoning Ordinance, Resolution and STR Application

Att. Gallo inquired if there were any comments to the revisions made to the zoning amendments. Jeff Werner commented that he feels that the STR Application Fee should be a once and done fee, not annual.

#### Recreational Fires

Not all members received the sample provided by Att. Gallo. The sample ordinance will be redistributed and discussed at a future meeting. There is a need to clarify recreational fires based upon a number of complaints.

#### ADJOURNMENT

With no further comments or discussion, the meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jennifer Harding