

WARWICK TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
September 25, 2013

Chairman Thomas Zug convened the September 25, 2013 meeting of the Warwick Township Planning Commission at 7:00 p.m. Present were Commissioners Thomas Zug, Jane Boyce, John Gazsi, Craig Kimmel, and Brent Richmond. Nathan Flood, Daniel Garrett, and Kenneth Kauffman were absent. In attendance were Township Manger Daniel Zimmerman, Township Engineer Chuck Haley, Gwen Newell, Whit Buckwalter, Nathan Jameson, David Buckwalter, Reid Buckwalter, and Randy Hess.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the August 28, 2013 meeting as written.

CONSIDER THE TRADITIONS OF AMERICA PHASE I FINAL SUBDIVISION PLAN, PREPARED BY RGS ASSOCIATES, DATED 8/23/2013: Chris Venarchick, representing RGS Associates, provided a background of the project for the benefit of those present. He explained that the entire project area is comprised of 60 acres. Phase I proposes 79 dwelling units; 55 would be single-family units and 24 would be duplex units. He noted that the plan has not changed from the preliminary plan submittal. This phase would have a density of 2.8 units per acre; although at full build-out, the density would be 4.1, which is below the 4.5 units per acre that is permitted by the Ordinance. Venarchick explained that Phase I includes the improvements to West Millport Road and noted that a left turn lane would be added at the entrance. The Township Manager noted that the construction of the improvements would be coordinated between the Applicant and Township. The left turn lane would begin near the intersection of Buckwalter Road. In addition, a secondary access via the extension of a private drive to the Heart of Lancaster Hospital site would also be constructed. Venarchick stated that the recreational improvements would also be provided as part of Phase I of the development. He added that these include the construction of the 7,500 square feet community center, walking trails, tennis courts, shuffle board court and swimming pool.

Venarchick outlined the proposed stormwater management design. He explained that the basins and associated facilities would be constructed during Phase I, and would drain toward Bachman Run. Subsequent phases would include piping to convey water to these areas. He addressed the Township Engineer's comment letter dated September 18, 2013. He noted that the Applicant has no objections to the comments. The Township Manager added that a draft of all of the agreements have been submitted for review. A Commission member stated that the County recommends a buffer to the north of the site between the shared property line with the adjoining farming operation. The Township Manager explained that both tracts are zoned residential and noted that if it were zoned commercial or industrial, the Ordinance would require a buffer. The Township Engineer added that a planted buffer is not always desired between a residential tract and farming operation since these buffers tend to shade farm areas which limit what can be planted in these areas. Gwen Newell, representing the Lancaster County Planning Commission, stated that the recommendation is from a farmer on the Planning Commission. She added that the recommendation is often included when residential areas adjoin tracts with farming operations. A Commission member inquired whether a trail connection could be provided along Centennial Court to the riparian trail to create a loop in this phase of the development. Venarchick stated that due to the grade and the stormwater facilities in this area, they would like to avoid a trail connection at this time since subsequent phases would ultimately complete the trail system. The Township Manager stated that the improvement guarantee could include a note that this trail connection would be constructed if future phases are not completed as proposed.

On a motion by Boyce, seconded by Kimmel, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Traditions of America, Phase I Final Plan contingent upon the Township Engineer's comments being addressed, and upon a note in the improvement guarantee regarding a trail connection if subsequent phases are not constructed.

CONSIDER SKETCH PLAN FOR QUAIL RIDGE LOT 138, PREPARED BY RGS ASSOCIATES, DATED 9/5/2013: Mark Johnson, representing RGS Associates, explained that they are requesting an interpretation of whether or not previous approvals for Quail Ridge apply to this lot. He added that although the previous approvals occurred well over 5 years ago, a section of the Municipalities Planning Code provides for continuation of the approvals beyond 5 years if public improvements have been constructed. The Township Manager explained that the approvals occurred in 1986, and the approved improvements have been completed. Johnson stated that the plan proposes 28 apartments within 3 buildings on an approximate 3.016 acre parcel. He noted that the apartments would be 2-story with one apartment on the first floor and a second apartment on the second floor. The proposal also includes 56 parking spaces. He stated that the parcel is located along East Newport Road and was identified as Lot 138 of the Quail Ridge Plan. Johnson stated that the original plan for Lot 138 proposed 36 apartments; however, the lot was subsequently subdivided into Lot 138, Lot 138A, and Lot 138B. At that time, the plan showed a shared access to East Newport Road and there were 4 apartment units on Lot 138A and 4 apartments on Lot 138B. Lot 138 included 28 apartment units and 56 parking spaces. These other 8 units were constructed, as well as a detention basin shown on the southern end of the property. He added that a 24' wide access was also provided, which meets current sight visibility requirements. Johnson stated that these units represent the last of the overall 164 units that were originally proposed. He explained that the issue for the project is the proposed density of 9.28 dwelling units per acre. He added that the Quail Ridge apartments were approved at 9.39 units per acre, and the townhomes were approved at 10.98 units per acre. He noted that the current Ordinance provides for only 5 dwelling units per acre and explained that they would like to develop the tract at similar densities as the surrounding area in order for the homes to be marketable. He explained that the Ordinance allows up to 9 units per acre in some instances and added that in reviewing Newport Square and Highlands at Warwick, if unbuildable areas such as steep slopes and floodplain are removed, and with the detention areas as they exist, these developments are also 11 units per acre. He added that according to the Ordinance, only 15 homes could be constructed on the site and it would not match the character of the neighborhood. The Township Manager stated that it appears access has been provided to the site, and public and sewer are adjacent to the development; in addition the required basin has been constructed. He stated that he would need clarification of whether or not the project would need to meet current stormwater requirements if the Township would allow the density. The Township Engineer stated that since over one acre of the site would be disturbed for the project, an NPDES permit would be required. Johnson expressed the opinion that the project could meet the current stormwater requirements. Randy Hess, the site developer, stated that he intends to construct modern one and two bedroom garden apartments on the site. He noted that if the Township does not approve of the density, he would not develop the site. He explained that the one bedroom apartments would be between 850-900 square feet and two bedroom apartments would be between 1,100-1,200 square feet. He added that rental rates would be between \$900-\$1,100 per month (approximately \$1.00 per square foot). The Township Manager stated that parking requirements are up to 3 spaces per unit; however, depending on the ratio of units, the Township could possibly allow 2 parking spaces per unit with certain restrictions. Hess stated that he is currently proposing 16 2-bedroom apartments, and 12 1-bedroom apartments. Johnson stated that tandem parking could be restricted; therefore, less parking spaces might be needed since individuals do not tend to use the tandem parking spaces which then act as a single parking space. The Chairman inquired whether or not guest parking is available. He added that if individuals have guests, there would not be available parking. Newell stated that a new housing study has been completed that indicates that 25% of Lancaster County households are one-person. She added that the County would support 2 parking spaces per unit. The Commission members indicated that they might be agreeable to the higher density proposal provided that the project could meet storm water management requirements, and to allow 2 parking spaces with a mix of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments based on the previous approvals for the Quail Ridge Development.

UPDATE TO AMENDMENT TO THE STORMWATER ORDINANCE: Newell stated that the County has received verbal confirmation of the 1,000 square foot exemption to storm water management requirements. She added that the County is currently in the process of amending their draft Ordinance to include this provision. She noted that the municipalities would have 6 months from when the County's amended storm water model is adopted. She noted that County staff met with DEP representatives and received feedback regarding the language in the model ordinance. She added that the document has been provided to some municipal solicitors and engineers, and if they are agreeable to the language, they hope to have the document before the County Commissioners for approval by mid-October. Subsequently, DEP could provide their decision by the end of October. The Township Manager noted that this would provide for the municipal adoptions by April, 2014. Newell added that in addition to the 1,000 square foot exemption, a 2,000-5,000 square foot modified proposal could be included. The Township Manager stated that the Township is considering an alternate review process for agricultural buildings up to 20,000 square feet if the conservation plan is fully implemented. He noted that all of the farms in Warwick Township have conservation plans in various stages of implementation. Newell stated that the Township would need to seek separate approval from DEP if they will not meet the County's model ordinance. She added that the County would like to proceed in a timely manner with the Ordinance.

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The Township Manger explained that Warwick Township worked with a consultant that reviewed stream improvements and development in the area and their subsequent calculations indicate that the Township meets DEP's TMDL requirements. Newell added that the County's current model ordinance eliminates exemptions for agricultural buildings. The Township Manager stated that the Board will wait until the County's model ordinance is approved before acting on the Township's amended ordinance.

ADJOURNMENT: With no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel L. Zimmerman
Township Manager