

**RICE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
RICE TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING
3000 CHUCH ROAD
MOUNTAIN TOP, PA 18707**

**MINUTES
October 26, 2016**

The regular monthly meeting of the Rice Township Planning Commission was held on Wednesday, October 26, 2016.

ROLL CALL:

- Ray Fedor - Here**
- Ann Kijek - Here**
- Kevin Rogan - Absent**
- Tom Romanyshyn - Here**
- Bob Smith - Here**

Also in attendance were: See Sign in Sheet

Chairman, Ray Fedor, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

MOTION TO ACCEPT MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (June 22, 2016):

Motion by Ann Kijek; seconded by Tom Romanyshyn. All in favor.

OLD BUSINESS: None

1.) Davis Reverse Subdivision - Glenn Davis, and Patricia Davis, presented documentation requesting a reverse subdivision of his two contiguous properties on Nuangola Road. The resulting property would result in approximately 1/2 acre. Davis requested that the request be considered for a streamlined consideration as was granted to Mr. Jeckell. Marcia Thomas concurred that such a process did occur, with the property lines undisputed. Discussion was held among the Commission Jack Varaly, Interim Zoning Officer, and Chad Sweigart from the Solicitor's office concerning this request. The reason for the request is that the application under full survey and full SALDO requirements essentially results in the costs overwhelming the small benefit to reduce taxes. Ray Fedor concluded that the topic be presented at the next meeting for consideration.

2.) Jack Varaly - Comprehensive Plan Update - Varaly noted that the on-line resident survey resulted in insufficient responses to be statistically valid. Therefore, the Planning Commission would have to use its good judgment to update the Comprehensive Plan.

Varaly presented his update for the Comprehensive Plan. He reviewed the change in the housing elements for the Township since 2000. Despite the recession, Rice Township grew by approximately 10%, with housing units increasing from 950 to 1339. No area in Luzerne County had greater growth than Rice Township. There are very few rental units, which means that high ownership means that there is a vested interest in the well-being of the Township. Varaly discussed

PRD and Conservation by Design projects, noting that while a mixture of housing types is desirable, the market for such housing likely does not exist in Rice Township. Tom Romanyshyn note the high expense of developing due to requirements mandated by outside agencies. Only large companies such as Hallmark have the financial ability to manage through the costs. Marcia Thomas commented that Pinnacle Court and the Village of Mountaintop provides some mix, but the Township does not have the urban setting where such development works. Discussion continued concerning the proposed development in Dorrance with over 200 units. This would be a mix of 2-unit, townhouse and single family dwellings. With that project based on MAJSA hookup, Bob Smith talked about the difficulty of providing more compact house, such as age-sensitive dwellings, without the access to sewer facilities. Varaly touched on derelict properties, and wondered if funds might exist for demolition purposed. Jeff Beck will investigate. Varaly itemized the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan and the MPC, with the conclusion that these would need to be reviewed.

NEW BUSINESS: None

PUBLIC COMMENT: When Mr. Rowles was asked if he had any issue to bring to the Commission, he responded that he would like to meet with Varaly as some point.

ADJOURNMENT: After discussion among the Committee members and Varaly, it was decided to continue the meeting on November 14 since Varaly had additional information to present with regard to the Comprehensive Plan update.

MOTION by Romanyshyn, second by Fedor, to continue this meeting at the Township building on Monday, November 14, at 7:00PM.

MOTION CARRIED.

The next meeting of the Planning Commission is Wednesday, November 16th, at 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

October 26, 2016

The continuation of the monthly meeting of the Rice Township Planning Commission, held on Wednesday, October 26, 2016 was held on Monday, November 14, at 7 PM at the Township Building.

ROLL CALL:

- Ray Fedor - Here**
- Ann Kijek - Here**
- Kevin Rogan - Absent**
- Tom Romanyshyn - Absent**
- Bob Smith - Here**

Also in attendance were: See Sign in Sheet

Chairman, Ray Fedor, reconvened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

The Commission continued its discussion of the presented reverse subdivision with Jack Varaly, Interim Zoning Officer and Jack Dean, Solicitor. Points were made regarding the "streamlined" process, which can reduce the cost to eliminate a property line for reverse subdivision purposes, and the County cost which otherwise creates an inordinate hurdle for the simple line elimination of two small contiguous properties. Varaly noted that there was no provision in the MPC to allow for such a process.

Varaly presented the Economic and Social Profile for the Township, updated from the 2000 Census data. It is clear that Rice Township is the most affluent within Luzerne County, and has less than 1% at the poverty level compared to 12.1% for the County. Fifty-six percent of households make \$50,000 or more, while 48% of family households have incomes in excess of \$100,000. The unemployment rate for the Township is 2.2% compared to 5.1% for the County. Twenty-five percent of households received Social Security benefits. The location of the Township relative to Interstate 81 help keep the average commute times to 26 minutes. Lastly, 38% of the Township population has at least a bachelor's degree.

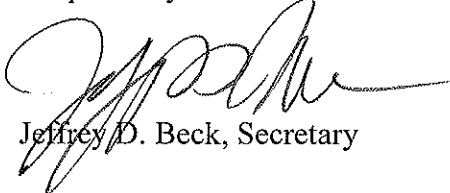
Varaly noted that Zoning Ordinances do not handle the issue of derelict properties well. Jack discussed the elements around dealing with derelict properties. The International Property Maintenance Code is a possible solution. Jack Dean gave an example of using a nuisance ordinance, and how time consuming and expensive its application may be, but it does work.

Varaly presented a list of new/revised goals for the Planning Commission to consider as it reviewed the Comprehensive Plan. These were discussed, but no action was taken at this time.

The Commission discussed the next meeting date, November 16, 2016, and Secretary Beck will notify members whether or not a meeting would be held.

MOTION by Romanyshyn, second by Fedor, to adjourn the meeting at 7:42PM.
MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully Submitted:



Jeffrey D. Beck, Secretary