

AGENDA ITEMS
Hawthorne Court

cc:	R. Birch	K. Johnson
	M. Fox	Sewer Authority
	J. McDonnell	F. Bartle
	J. Walsh	B. Shoupe
	C. Chimera	E. Reynolds
	L. McGuire	M. Beatty
	J. Glickman	M. Schelly
	L. Manai	J. Goldstein
	J. Trump	J. Rall

MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
May 19, 2011

The May 19, 2011, meeting of the Montgomery Township Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Jonathan Trump at 7:30 p.m. In attendance were Commissioners Michael Beatty, Jay Glickman, Leon McGuire, James Rall and Ellen Reynolds. Also present were Matthew Schelly, Montgomery County Planning Commission, Bruce Shoupe, Director of Planning and Zoning, and Candyce Fluehr Chimera, Supervisor Liaison.

The minutes of March 17, 2011, were approved as submitted.

There were no public comments.

The first item on the agenda was the Hawthorne Court development. Jim Garrity, attorney, representing the applicant, was present to address this plan. Mr. Shoupe provided the Planning Commission members and Mr. Garrity a copy of a letter from the Township Solicitor concerning the waiver request for replacement trees, which was recommended for approval by the Planning Commission. The essence of this letter was that a waiver was not necessary and the Applicant is able to comply with the code. Chairman Trump then explained that this plan had been discussed several times by the Planning Commission, most recently on March 17, 2011. He stated that it was his understanding that the concerns were as follows: 1) the hotel itself and/or the location of the hotel; 2) entrance to Gwynmont Drive; 3) lighting and safety; and 4) the market demand for the hotel, daycare and office buildings. Mr. Trump further stated that it was his understanding that the developer had met with the residents of Gwynmont Farms and that they had agreed to implement several items requested by the residents. Mr. Garrity gave a brief explanation of the history of this parcel. It had always been zoned C-Commercial.

The first plan approval had been for a large supermarket; the second plan was for two – 3 story office buildings of approximately 60,000 square feet each. The present plan shows a one-story daycare facility, a 4-story hotel, and a 3-story office building. Mr. Garrity advised that the Planning Commission had previously recommended approval of the waiver requests and that they had actually suggested an additional waiver be requested; to place evergreen trees on top of the berm. Mr. Garrity stated that the applicant would be willing to do this. He further indicated that they had met with the residents of Gwynmont Farms and felt that some progress had been made. He advised that subsequent to the meeting, his clients had agreed to modify the plan as follows:

- Light fixtures – it was felt that 30 feet would be too high, therefore, the applicant had agreed to lower the height to 20 feet and to shield the fixtures from access to the adjoining residences;
- Signage – the sign which was to be placed at the rear of the hotel would be moved to the southern side of the building so that it could not be seen from the surrounding neighborhood;
- Trash removal – it was agreed to limit the times of collection from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday only.
- Deliveries – for the hotel, it was agreed to limit deliveries to 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday only.
- Rear door of hotel – as most of the parking is in the rear of the hotel, the guests would be utilizing the rear door. Entry will be limited to a key entry system. No one else would be able to access this door.
- Fence – the applicant had agreed to install an 8 foot shadowbox fence around the northern and eastern property lines in order to assist with security and buffering. The applicant will maintain both sides of the fence.
- Buffer Trees – the applicant had agreed to install evergreen trees on top of the berm and will plant one row of trees of 10 to 12 feet in height.

Mr. Garrity advised that an issue that was still outstanding was that of the Gwynmont Drive Extension. He stated that they would be willing to do whatever the Township wanted. However, they did agree with the previous Township position that the extension was necessary to ensure safe left hand turns out of the development. There were several options to be considered. Mr. Garrity mentioned that the residents appeared to not want the street to be opened at all.

Mr. Garrity further advised that the plan is to be done in phases and Phase I complies with the Township's Zoning Code and had also complied with all of the comments of the Township's consultants. He stated that the Township should follow its code and approve the plan. Mr. Garrity asked that the Planning Commission make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors for a preliminary/final plan. Mr. Trump asked about the status of the trail recommended by the County Planning Commission. It was noted that the applicant had agreed to provide an 8-foot wide stone base easement for the trail along the detention basin northern and western sides. Mr. Garrity stated that the applicant would also provide a split rail fence with wire meshing around the detention basin.

Mr. Trump stated that the question of the extension to Gwynmont Drive was still outstanding. This was proposed to be a signalized intersection. He advised that he did not feel that it could be deleted from the plan entirely. He would be in favor of the road being one way out. He asked the Planning Commission members for their input on this item. Ms. Reynolds, Mr. McGuire, Mr. Glickman and Mr. Rall were in agreement with Mr. Trump. Mr. Beatty felt that, if the residents did not wish to have this extended, that it maybe should not be extended. However, this was based on there being other means of egress and ingress to the development.

Rich Fosco, 109 Gwynmont Drive, stated that they did not wish to have the road extended into the development. It was felt that this was a safety issue and would provide easy access for transient traffic through their neighborhood. He mentioned that the residents had opposed this access in 2003 and were still opposed to it. In 2003, the Board had agreed to monitor the situation and then reevaluate to see if the road could possibly be closed. This development never took place. The residents are now requesting that the road extension not be put through.

An unidentified resident noted that the height of the berm was not equal everywhere. Mr. Garrity explained that this was an existing berm, but that they would look into this to see what may be able to be accomplished to make it even all across.

A discussion occurred regarding the parking situation. The applicant had agreed to install those spaces that the code required at this time. If the Township agreed, they would keep the other area "in reserve" until necessary. The residents were concerned that if the use changed from a day care to perhaps a restaurant, the number of spaces would be different. They wondered what would happen at that time. Mr. Shoupe explained that they would need to go before the Zoning Hearing Board for a variance for the number of parking spaces, if the use would change and they could not meet the code requirements.

A question also arose regarding the old sewer treatment plant. It was explained that Gwynmont Farms had originally had a treatment plant just for this development. This had been shut down for a while and they were now part of the Eureka plant. However, the eight inch pipe was never upgraded. It was felt that with this new development, especially with a hotel, it would be too small. Mr. Shoupe explained that the Municipal Sewer Authority would review this plan and would comment if there were any problems. He also noted that DEP required that any new development plans for any changes to the sewer system to be submitted to DEP. Therefore, it would be necessary for the applicant to obtain approval from DEP.

After some further discussion, Mr. Trump noted that there was still the outstanding question as to the extension of Gwynmont Drive. As he saw it, there were three possibilities; 1) no extension; 2) a two-way roadway; and 3) a one - way exit only roadway. He asked the Planning Commission members for their final thoughts. Mr. Beatty said that he would agree with the residents that it is not needed. As long as there are other means for emergency access to the development, he did not feel that this was necessary. The development had been there for many years and the roadway had not been there previously. Mr. Glickman stated that he felt that the roadway should be a one-way, exit only. Mr. Rall agreed with Mr. Glickman. He thought that it would make left turns much safer. Mr. McGuire asked if the Fire Marshal had indicated what he would prefer to see here. He noted, that perhaps, a surface could be installed that would be passable for emergency vehicles if necessary, but that the roadway not be opened. He did note that, either way, pedestrians could still access the development. Ms. Reynolds stated that she also felt that the road should be a one-way, exit only. Mr. Trump advised that he still thought that the

roadway extension was necessary, but would agree that a one-way, exit only road would be satisfactory. Therefore, the Planning Commission was in favor of the one-way roadway extension, 4-2. The consensus of the residents present was that they were not happy about this decision. Mr. Trump explained that they were only an advisory committee; the final decision was that of the Board of Supervisors. This did not necessarily mean that the Board would agree with the Planning Commission. A motion was made by Mr. Glickman, seconded by Ms. Reynolds, to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that this plan be approved, subject to satisfactory compliance with all comments of the Township's review agencies. As was noted previously, the waiver requests had already been recommended for approval by the Planning Commission. It was further recommended that the Gwynmont Road Extension be installed as a one-way, exit only road. Motion carried unanimously. Mr. Garrity thanked the Commission for their time.

Mr. Trump presented a synopsis of the Board of Supervisors meeting for May. He then advised that there were two candidates for the vacant position on the Planning Commission. Interviews will be arranged for the next meeting in June.

There being no further business, this meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Marita Stoerrle
Development Coordinator/
Recording Secretary