

Pledge of Allegiance

Present:

Present at the meeting: Chris Kerns, Ryan Lemke, Jayne Hoy, Bob Mitall, Ed Patrick, James Olszewski, and Anthony Livecchi. Also in attendance was Chief Administrator Jim Morrison.

Absent: Council Liaison Carl Stepanovich

Minutes: Ms. Hoy moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Lemke seconded. All present voted aye. Motion approved.

Public Comment: None.

Old Business: None

New Business:

1. A discussion concerning a proposed ordinance to permit senior apartment housing in a conditional use in the Business “B” District

Mr. Morrison prepared and presented some draft ordinances related to this issue and explained them. He said the idea was to provide for senior housing in districts throughout the Municipality. Through previous discussions with the Planning Commission, the thought was to set up the apartments as conditional uses in the Business District and have identified various districts and housing options for the residential districts.

He noted that, for lack of a better term, the apartments are identified as active adult apartments and are defined as multi-story, multi-family dwellings designed and operated specifically for occupancy by residents who are 55 years old or older or where 80% or more of the occupied units in the development are occupied by a resident who is 55 years or older. He reviewed the existing ordinances for height limitations and other regulations, which is where some of the suggestions come from. He also reviewed ordinances developed by Bethel Park and two other communities. The biggest challenge in putting the recommendations together is density. He reminded the members that these are thoughts and that nothing is written in stone. He enumerated the suggested site area, landscape requirements, building height, setbacks from lot line, architectural requirements, minimum square footage for dwelling unit, and requirements in each unit. The density proposed is 15 units per gross acre. It has not been determined whether this will be an amendment to the ordinance or be regulated by the Building Code. Performance standards, parking, sidewalks, and recreation space are also included in the proposed ordinance. He noted that the proposed ordinance was forwarded to counsel for the developer, who responded with comments.

Mr. Mitall confirmed that this is intended only in the B District, and that should be noted in the ordinance. Ms. Hoy asked why this type of housing is suggested in only the B District. Mr. Morrison responded that, in his opinion, it would be a “rough road to hoe” in the

residential district. She and Mr. Mitall asked about including it in the R-3 District; Ms. Hoy said maybe the height of the building would be an issue in that District. Mr. Mitall noted that the ordinance states the setback should be equal to the height of the building and suggested that the wording include “but not less than that required in the B District.” Mr. Mitall referenced the requirement for recreation space which notes .25 acres of the open space area, but there is no requirement for open space. Mr. Kerns suggested removing the word “the” and, therefore, indicating .25 acres of open space for recreation. There was discussion on wording for the recreation space and Ms. Hoy said the density is an issue and needs to be thought out. Mr. Morrison said he didn’t envision needing a lot of acreage as much as a preferred acreage to provide for passive recreation. Ms. Hoy said she thinks that number needs more work. Mr. Mitall said there is no requirement for open space so it could be all building and parking lot, and asked if there needs to be a set amount of open space. He said he believes the requirement for businesses is 20%. There was discussion to make the requirement a portion of the 20% but no less than... and it was suggested to set aside .25 of the 20% for recreational purposes. Ms. Hoy suggested removing the word “passive.”

Mr. Kerns questioned the 5 acre minimum site requirement and said he could envision a 2-3 acre area with a smaller building. Ms. Hoy said the question is do they want to make the requirement less than 5 acres? Ms. Hoy said it sounded reasonable to set it at 3 acres (15 units/acre). There was a question from someone in the audience, but with no microphone, his comments couldn’t be heard. Mr. Kerns asked if the 800 sf was actual unit space or averaged out over the units. Mr. Morrison said it was actual unit space and was based on his research.

A gentleman approached the microphone but didn’t introduce himself (I believe it is Robert Jack). In discussing the square footage of the units, he said theirs average between 600-850, but if averaging in the common areas (community rooms, libraries, game rooms, etc.), they are slightly over 800. Mr. Jack said their 600 sf units have a kitchen area, living room, etc. and run around \$1,200/month. As far as recreation, Mr. Mitall said he thinks indoor amenities (as noted above) that need to be provided should also be considered. Mr. Olszewski said that, in the developer’s comments, he talks about the open space inside the building. Mr. Mitall said he doesn’t want to go below 600 sf/unit. Mr. Patrick suggested a number for living space and a number for recreation. Mr. Mitall said he believes there should be a section indicating that space shall be provided for meeting rooms, libraries, gathering areas, etc. He didn’t suggest a percentage but said there needs to be a statement that requires that. Mr. Patrick said residents in the 55 age range may use outdoor space more, while those older would be using the indoor areas. Mr. Jack said there are not many residents in the 55 age range in their other developments, with the average age around 74. Ms. Hoy said their job is to provide for everyone – 55 to 105 – so both indoor and outdoor areas are needed. Mr. Morrison suggested “common area space shall be sufficient to meet the needs of the residents (i.e. list areas).”

Mr. Jack asked about the density issue. The Municipality lists density as 15 units/acre and the developer is asking for 17 units/acre. He said they typically have 1.18 tenants/unit, so even though the density seems higher, based on the number of people it is less than an all-age complex. Mr. Lemke asked what the total impervious surface coverage is on the plan. Mr. Jack said it is less than 80% and he believes it is in the 60% range. The members were in agreement with allowing the 17 units/acre. Mr. Lemke said he would not be in favor of

lowering the parking requirement. Mr. Morrison said he is hesitant to go below the 1.2 requirement. The members agreed. Mr. Patrick said he wasn't in favor of a parking study. Mr. Jack said they did a study of 15 operating properties regarding utilization. He said not everyone has a car and it comes out to about .8 units having a car. Mr. Kerns said he didn't have a problem with leaving the parking study in. Mr. Patrick said a parking study is done at a point in time and if the demographics change, another study won't be done because the condition has already been granted. Mr. Jack said they could include vacancy rate on the study. Mr. Patrick said he didn't have a problem with a parking study; it could be accepted, rejected or modified.

Mr. Mitall asked how it can be proven, each year, that it is still a 55 and over community. Mr. Morrison said there are specific guidelines outlined in the Act. A census must be done and identification must be presented to verify age. Mr. Mitall asked how the Municipality can enforce the requirement. Mr. Morrison said it's not enforcement by the Municipality, but of the Federal Housing Department of Development Agency. Mr. Morrison read the requirements enumerated in the Act.

The changes noted are: add B District to the conditional use; 5 reduced to 3 acres; density 17; setback from the lot line but not less than what is required in the district; 600 sf for minimum unit size; outdoor recreation space shall be 25% of the open area requirement; common area space shall be sufficient to meet the requirements of the residents (i.e. meeting rooms, fitness rooms, beauty/barber salons, etc.).

2. A discussion concerning a proposed amendment to the zoning district to permit the development of senior residential housing under the federal Housing for Older Persons Act in the R-1, R-2 and R-3 (Districts).

Mr. Morrison said he spoke with several developers to get an idea of what one of these units would look like and found that, usually, the footprint of the structure is no smaller than a 40 x 70 house and, typically, the minimum lot size is between 6,800-7,100 sf. He worked from that point to develop densities. He said the ordinance is based around the process for PRD approval – pre-application, tentative then final approval, so a lot of the items that are beyond the density are lifted out of the PRD ordinance. He continued by stating that the type of units proposed by district was based on previous conversations held with the Commission, general conversations with staff and counsel. It was suggested that the type of development be permitted in the R-1, R-2 and R-3 Districts, and that the R-1 District only permit single-family detached; R-2 single-family, two-family, triplex; R-3 single-family, two-family, triplex and garden apartments. He said he was told fourplexes are not done anymore because they are too cumbersome and the geography doesn't lend to it.

Based on that information, Mr. Morrison assumed that the minimum lot size would be around 7,000 feet; he divided that lot size into the underlying zoning lot requirement and came up with a formula that basically equates to a 6 unit/acre density. Mr. Kerns said he doesn't think he has ever been able to max out density on a piece of ground in western PA because of terrain and topography; a lot of space is lost and is unusable. Mr. Morrison said the "guts" of

the ordinance is to identify use by District and then density by District and the rest pretty much follows the PRD ordinance.

Mr. Mitall asked for discussion on the maximum dwelling unit density. For discussion, if there is a 50 acre site in an R-1 District, with 10 acres thrown away for steep slopes, streams, wetlands, leaving 40 acres, that makes 8 units/acre ($.2 \times \text{total number of acres} = \text{density}$). There was confusion regarding the numbers and Mr. Morrison then recalculated $.16 \times 40 = 6.4$ units/acre or 256 units. Mr. Mitall said that was absurd; he didn't think the numbers worked and 256 units in the R-1 District was too dense. Mr. Morrison said he worked from the assumption that the density they wanted to work with was 6 units/acre because the lot size is 7,000 sf. Mr. Mitall asked where the 7,000 sf lot size came from. Mr. Morrison said that's what is needed for a 40 x 70 house with side and rear yard requirements. Mr. Kerns said that is a reasonable lot size for what they are talking about here.

Mr. Mitall said the problem is that one unit per acre is permitted in the R-1 District. With this proposed density of 6 units/acre, six times as many units as the base zoning are permitted. Ms. Hoy said that might cause a stir in Murrysville. Mr. Morrison said the formula works, it's just a manner of what multiplier to use and the number of units desired per acre. Mr. Mitall said he could see double. Mr. Morrison asked why have it in R-1 because he thought people didn't want half-acre lots if they're moving into step-down homes. Mr. Mitall said he questions some of the basic assumptions that Mr. Morrison is operating under. He noted that house size of 40 x 70 (2,800 sf) and asked if that made sense for a 55 and over community. Ms. Hoy said that's pretty big. Mr. Morrison said he put a site plan in the drop box for a plan being built in Robinson Township.

There was discussion on the cost of housing and potential inability to sell current housing in order to downsize. Mr. Patrick said he thought the whole purpose of this is to make housing more affordable. Mr. Kerns said if the units are smaller, there will be more units/acre and that if every square inch not environmentally sensitive was being used for a lot area, plus roads, setbacks, open space, and buffers, the six-fold maximum density will never be realized.

Mr. Patrick discussed the original example of a 50 acre site and did some calculations. Mr. Mitall then discussed the R-3 District and, using the same analogy with 40 acres left over, there would be 160 units (minimum lot size 10,400 or 4/acre). He said he doesn't think the density of 6 applies to the R-1 District. Mr. Morrison said the multiplier can be whatever the Commission wants and would depend on how many units they want per acre. Mr. Mitall said he doesn't think it can go from 1/acre to 6/acre in an R-1 District. He said the whole concept of a PRD is that different types of housing can be created – garden apartments, duplexes, quads, etc., but the density is limited. Mr. Morrison said it depends on what is wanted. There is no need for the ordinance if the PRD concept is what is wanted to have creativity and minimize density. Mr. Mitall said the intent is to increase density for over-55 communities but he thinks 6/acre is going too far. Mr. Morrison asked what number is desired and would it make it feasible to develop? Mr. Patrick asked what the affordability range would be for a person in the market to downsize in Murrysville.

Mr. Olszewski asked if it has to be force-fitted into R-1. Mr. Morrison said it doesn't have to be in R-1, but can be in R-2 or R-3. Ms. Hoy said there is already a higher density in those areas. Mr. Olszewski 6/1 in R-3 would work and even 4/1 could be on the edge of affordability. Again discussing the 50 acre parcel, with the minimum lot size in R-2 being ½ acre, this would allow 80 units under base zoning. Mr. Kerns did some calculations based on open space and came up with 224 units, but then roads, etc. had to be accounted for. Ms. Hoy reminded that R-2 is only single-family, two-family and triplex and said the numbers sound more like garden apartments. Mr. Morrison asked what if the number of single-families was limited and duplexes promoted, which reduces density. Ms. Hoy said patio-type homes with a common wall are, from a developer's standpoint, more economical. Mr. Morrison said if lot sizes get over 7,000, 8,000, 10,000 sf – it won't work. Mr. Kerns said, back to his original point, the 240 unit count is staggering but he believes it is impossible. Mr. Mitall said 4 per acre in R-2 is more realistic. Mr. Mitall said the density issue requires a lot of thought. Mr. Morrison said he has been struggling with that issue. Mr. Livecchi suggested simplifying it and taking the base zoning in the District times a multiplier. There was discussion on those numbers. Mr. Kerns suggested eliminating density and just using a minimum lot size. Mr. Morrison referenced a spreadsheet that was in the drop box, which listed the minimum lot size at 6875 feet. For the 2-family and triplex, he doubled and tripled the 6875. There was discussion on the lot size for the different types of homes and reduction/increase based on side yard requirements. Mr. Morrison reminded the members that the numbers were put forth as discussion items.

Mr. Mitall suggested postponing discussing density and looking at the other sections. Regarding lot size, the minimum size in R-1 and R-2 is 10 acres and in R-3 is 5 acres and must be under one ownership. Ms. Hoy asked if "one ownership" means these were rentals. Mr. Mitall said no, it means the developer is the owner of the property. In going through the individual sections of the proposed ordinance, Mr. Mitall asked if there would be public trails. Mr. Morrison said he didn't believe a 55 and older community would want public access. Mr. Mitall said he didn't think so either. Mr. Kerns asked about the 10' distance between buildings and suggested it should be at least 20'. Everyone was in agreement with that suggested change. Mr. Morrison noted that language in several sections was taken from the PRD ordinance; sidewalks and walkways to promote pedestrian circulation and roads are to be designed to calm vehicle traffic were added and not taken from the PRD. The application procedure and requirements were all taken from the PRD ordinance.

Back to discussing the density issue, Mr. Patrick said that they are looking at this as to what will be amenable to the community based on the people that live here. The other side of the coin is the developer; he asked how to get the viewpoint of the developer and find out how far apart the Commission might be in their wish list as to what they would like to have versus what the developer would find the "drop dead" minimum set of requirements to make it economically viable. He said the two options are to give in a bit on what the Commission thinks will fly in Murrysville or simply say it won't fit in Murrysville. Mr. Kerns said they should get rid of the density issue because it creates confusion and puts out numbers that aren't real or potential numbers that are not achievable. Mr. Morrison said to keep in mind that there aren't going to be developers building hundreds of these subdivisions because there isn't a market for them and if there are two or three, he thinks that will be a lot. Also, there is

not developable land in the R-1 and R-2 Districts. He said he thinks the real question is “should we be messing with the 55+ or should we be rezoning Zoning Districts; both are equally challenging.” Ms. Hoy asked if the PRD would lend itself more toward this type of development if it were more beneficial to a developer. Mr. Morrison said there is a density factor in a PRD. There was discussion about a few developments and whether they were PRDs. Mr. Mitall suggested looking at the original PRD ordinance for clues on the density issue. He also asked the members to exchange thoughts with each other and Mr. Morrison via email. Mr. Kerns mentioned a development in Robinson Township that has 61 lots on almost 28 acres, with a minimum lot size of 5,000 sf; he thinks the Commission should focus on lot size and not density.

Mr. Olszewski found the concept plan for Logan Ferry Road and it was discussed in February for Clover Development but there was nothing for February in the drop box. Mr. Morrison said he would put it in.

Other Business:

When asked if there was anything coming up or any developers presenting anything, Mr. Morrison said he expected something on the townhouses and Hillstone, but nothing was submitted. He added that he hasn't heard from GetGo, 4001 is under construction, and Council will act on Summit Bank at the next meeting.

Adjournment:

Mr. Kerns: Moved to adjourn at 8:42 p.m.

Ms Hoy: Seconded

Motion Approved: 7-0