

MINUTES FOR GARRETT HILL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING FOR OCTOBER 16, 2008

The Garrett Hill Steering Committee (GHSC) met on Thursday, October 16, 2008 at the United Methodist Church located at 930 Conestoga Road in Rosemont, PA for its weekly meeting, scheduled for 7 pm.

Present were Chair Rick Barker, Vice Chair Phil Ahr, and Committee members Betty Lou Norcini, Jerry O'Connor, Nancy Leinwand and Rick Eulo. URS Planner Marian Hull and 7th Ward Commissioner John Fisher attended and several members of the public were present.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Barker at 7:10 pm.

Barker introduced John Haines who had been retained to videotape the meeting since the Radnor Township Building was not able to accommodate the GHSC due to other commitments.

The public was directed to use a microphone when speaking in order to capture their comments.

Adopting the Agenda

O'Connor moved to adopt the Agenda as submitted seconded by Norcini. No discussion was held and the motion passed unanimously.

Approving Minutes

The minutes of the October 7 Meeting were distributed and reviewed. Barker offered a few minor edits.

Norcini motioned to approve the Minutes as amended, seconded by O'Connor. No discussion was held and the motion passed unanimously.

Announcements

Barker reviewed the list of Meetings still scheduled to be held through October 27, 2008.

Report of Officers

None

Report of Working Groups

None

Public Participation

Toni Bailey stated she had viewed the televised SC Meeting on October 7 where many individuals from the GHZD rose to say that they had not been properly informed in this process. She stated that she takes issue with these statements coming forward at this time because she has personally delivered many documents on Lowry's Lane and she personally directed Sara Pilling and Tommy Gray, two of her Block Captains, to deliver to every home on Garrett Ave.

Unfinished Business

Marian Hull reviewed her Memo of October 16 and addressed a few typographical errors.

She will clarify the allowance of attached structures and shared parking, and a discussion was held regarding the exemptions listed for the Rosemont Business Campus and the parking standards.

Barker stated that these parking standards will be less restrictive.

Ahr questioned the benefits of the 2-tiered parking standard.

Barker stated the Bob Loeper of Radnor Township recommended a different standard for Medical Office use than that of other Office uses.

Unfinished Business (cont'd)

Hull stated that it adds another layer of complexity any time there is a mix of uses on a property.

Public Participation

Tommy Gray stated that the people (businesses) on Conestoga Rd. need to be serviced in the area of parking, which has been a problem there for the last 50 years.

Janet Patrick stated that she was confused about Hull's report and inquired as to whether or not any changes were going to be recommended, which would require a vote. She also stated that the public was told there would be no changes to these documents and that no recommendations would be made to the final drafts.

Hull responded that she was looking for direction from the SC on many items in order to make the documents even more consistent with the original SC decisions. She stated that some changes may have to be made. The language relating to the Rosemont Business Campus needs to be cleared up, for example.

Sumanth Joseph stated that he has come forth with his grievances many times and he would like to know if anyone is considering making Garrett Ave all one mixed use district in the spirit of equality.

Tommy Gray stated that he agrees with Sumanth on this subject, that there have always been businesses on Garrett Ave, it has always been commercial and there was even an ice parlor in his home at one time. He admitted that Garrett Ave. "is a problem", but stated that it has always been a problem

Barker addressed Sumanth and stated that the GHSC had spent a great deal of time on this issue and that there are no businesses there (the GH-GA Neighborhood District) *now* – that it is a *neighborhood* now. He also stated that the infrastructure of the road will not support a mixed use development unless the road got widened.

Andy Tillman addressed Barker and questioned why the SC wanted to move the properties *back* on Garrett Ave and *forward* on Conestoga Rd. He insisted that this is *not* the original vision. The original vision was to keep Garrett Hill as it is – and Garrett Ave is currently commercial – so keep it commercial. He cautioned to get the cars off the street. Allow the properties to be developed so that the parking can be in the rear of the buildings instead of on Garrett Ave.

Hull responded that the original vision was to keep Garrett Hill exactly as it is today.

Tillman stated that this process was for the *future* of Garrett Hill and that the current economy is restrictive enough to this area, let alone the restrictions the GHSC is imposing in the Garrett Ave Neighbor District.

Tommy Gray stated that he does not believe the SC members have not truly checked out Garrett Ave and suggested that they go through each and every lot to compare what is written against what is realistic, as these properties can not be pushed back.

Sumanth Joseph stated that the GHSC has taken his property from one non-conforming state to another no-conforming state. He believes his building is approximately 39 ft. in height and the new GHZD documents are restricting the building height on his property to 30 ft.

He also asked if *anyone* who owns property in the GH-GA Neighborhood District has stated that they want to be zoned Residential.

He states that his property is only 3 lots away from the properties that have been allowed a Mixed Use designation and that he feels he and others are being treated unfairly not to be afforded the same benefits, since they are all currently zoned the same.

He agreed that C1 is not working on Garrett Ave but feels that Mixed Use would work from the bridge all the way down to Conestoga Rd.

He noted a condemned home located behind Tommy Gray's house and asked if that was to be preserved too.

Ken Norcini questioned the restriction in lot sizes and the prevention of lot consolidation. He did not understand why there would be a problem if a Garrett Ave owner had 2 lots and wanted to redevelop with an individual home. He stated that there might be some development that would make the neighborhood look nice and bring up the property values.

Sumanth Joseph restated his concerns regarding his property located in the GH-GA Neighborhood District. He stated his understanding for the attempt to preserve Garrett Hill, but asked at what price? What is the community really preserving in the end in the event that all the property owners sell out? He requested that the GHSC look at the Garrett Ave in a more wholistic manner. His property is located between the proposed GH-GA Mixed Use District and the current R5 District and he would understand if his property were zoned to match one of these Districts, but does not agree to be rezoned as a Neighborhood District.

Marian Hull turned the Public Participation over to the GHSC.

Barker announced that he has been tolerant up to this point, but that it is hard for him to listen to these distortions. He stated that the business people are not speaking truthfully, that the SC has worked slavishly, spending weeks of deliberation over the impervious coverage on Garrett Ave and that no one on the SC would ever consider making all of Garrett Ave 85% impervious.

He also addressed Tommy Gray and stated that, yes in fact, the SC has looked at every property on Garrett Ave several times.

Andy Tillman stated that if the GHSC wants a Residential zoning on Garrett Ave they must omit the lot width restriction. The lots are not wide enough to accommodate a family dwelling and a driveway. He stated that these were the things the GHSC were supposed to be fixing and getting the cars off the street.

Norcini asked Hull to confirm that the GHSC has written code to prevent lot consolidation, which she did. Norcini then asked the community members to confirm their continual plea *not* to increase density, which they did. Norcini then asked Hull one individual owned 2 lots and developed only one single home, would that not serve to *decrease* density?

Barker responded that it would not. It would, in fact, increase density.

Marian Hull brought the group back to the recommendations from her memo and requested direction.

Eulo motioned to accept and include the Medical Office parking requirement, 1 space per 200 sq. ft. for the 1st 50,000 sq. ft. of floor area and 1 space per 300 sq. ft. for floor area greater than 50,000 sq. ft. All other Office parking requirements will remain at 1 space per 285 sq. ft. of floor area.

Ahr seconded the motion, a short discussion was held and the motion passed unanimously.

Hull and the SC held a discussion which resulted in the agreement that she (Hull) would prepare the presentation to the BOC Meeting scheduled for October 27 and the individuals who still have issues with GHZD documents are invited to appear at that meeting and request their changes directly to the BOC.

Ahr motioned to charge Hull with the preparation of the written document to be included in the BOC packets and include views from both sides of the issues, seconded by Eulo.

A short discussion was held and Andrew Tillman stated it disappointed him that the SC put this in writing. He knows the SC has heard the issues and concerns, but he feels they did not listen.

A vote was held and the motion was passed by 8 votes, with Norcini abstaining.

Janet Patrick asked why the SC has not received the business community's issues in writing.

Tillman responded that he was directed by his attorney *not* to put anything in writing.

Tillman then asked Barker if a traffic study was done and referred to a conversation he had with Barker regarding the bulb-outs and the traffic problem they will create.

Barker agreed that Tillman is probably right and the bulb-outs will create a traffic problem, so it will be difficult to determine where to put them. He stated that it is a PennDOT issue that will have to be resolved by a traffic study.

Tillman stated that he feels the bulb-outs should be taken out of the documents.

He also stated his disbelief regarding the SC 2 ½ story height restriction on his lot. He compares his property to any other property in Radnor Township and now that he found his property consists of 2 lots and he can not combine them because his lot would then be 160 ft. wide. The SC proposed GHZD has a maximum lot width of 150 sq. ft. which he felt was a deliberate act taken by the SC in regard to his property.

Barker stated that the 2 ½ story height restriction will not be discussed, the 75 ft. lot width restriction was determined in March, and he believes that it is in Tillman's best interest to have 2 lots.

Tillman responded that Barker is writing this code as if he knows the future of Garrett Hill and asked how he knows if these things are right. Why are there maximum lot sizes – he feels there should only be minimum lot sizes, even if Garrett Ave is kept Residential. And provisions should be made for driveways on Garrett Ave that could support 6 or 8 cars to keep them off the street.

Gina Forman stated that that is exactly what the community does *not* want. She lives on Good Shepherd, which she equates to Garrett Ave, and she imagines that if big, expensive homes were able to be built on Garrett Ave, she and many others would not be able to afford to live in Radnor Township.

Leinwand assured to Tillman that the SC *did* listen and does care about his concerns but the proposed GHZD mandate covers the entire community.

Tillman stated that the documents were written with input of the community and not the input of the property owners.

Patti Barker reviewed the GHC's multiple attempts to involve the property and business owners in the process as far back as January, 2008 by mail, phone contact and personal delivery of documents. There were also 3 meetings held specifically for the business community early in the process.

Tillman stated that he is fighting for the business community. He doesn't live in Garrett Hill, but he works in Garrett Hill. He can not vote in Garrett Hill, but he pays Radnor Township property and business taxes. He states that once these documents are written in RT code, there will be no flexibility.

Rick Barker referenced affordable housing, which GH has and is worth preserving. He acknowledged that the SC has very little flexibility.

Ahr questioned Barker about the amount of flexibility the SC has regarding the consideration of any of the issues.

Sumanth Joseph stated that the RT Commissioners issued the one month extension in the hopes of having *more* people in support of the GHZD documents and he has come to the meetings and repeatedly stated his concerns.

He reminded the SC of the BOC Meeting held on September 22 where Commissioner Paolino asked RT Solicitor David Blake if the documents could be challenged and the process held up in court.

He stated that the business and property owners wanted to be represented by the SC and for everyone to be "on the same page", but that that was not happening.

Marian Hull gave an overview of the SC's present role and explained that the task they were charged with was to *educate* those with concerns regarding the documents so that those individuals with issues could clearly articulate their case to the BOC on October 27, the next Meeting they expected to vote on the adoption of the GHZD documents.

Ken Norcini asked if the SC can make recommendations on behalf of the property and business owners.

Toni Bailey stated that GH is an all-inclusive community that supports its businesses.

Sumanth stated that he would have seen a different potential for his property and would have paid less for it if it had not been zoned C1. It made a difference to him in value when he bought it and expects it will make a difference again when he sells it. He stated that he simply wants all the properties on Garrett Ave, which are currently zoned C1, to be treated equally and rezoned with the same designation and benefits.

A lengthy discussion was held by the SC Members and Marian Hull regarding Garrett Ave zoning districts and impervious coverage, the Conestoga Rd height restriction and 75% Site Amenities trigger and all lot width restrictions. There were mixed views shared among the SC members and Rick Barker stated that the 2 ½ vs. 3 story height restriction issue may be the only area where the SC has latitude. No motions were made.

New Business

None.

Public Participation

Andy Tillman stated the following:

The GHSC was supposed to use the transportation system to bring people to Garrett Hill in this process His relative's home on Garrett Ave. can only be redeveloped with a 17 ft. wide building due to the setbacks currently proposed by the SC. He extends his congratulations to the SC.

All the people in Garrett Hill should be required to contribute the 5% escrow on each permit application since they were able to decide how high his building should be, etc.

Bywood Seafood should be removed from the GHZD boundaries.

The 75% Site Amenities trigger needs to be removed.

Banks should be an allowed use on Conestoga Rd.

Outdoor dining should not be prohibited.

Adjournment

Ahr motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:45 pm, seconded by Leinwand. The motion passed unanimously.

The next GHSC Meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 21, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,
Rick Barker
On behalf of James Cunilio,
GHSC Secretary