

**UPPER ALLEN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
April 24, 2023
7:00 P.M.**

PC MEMBERS

R. Wayne Willey, Chairperson
Robert Siodlowski, Vice-Chairperson (absent)
Amanda Parrish, Secretary
Scott Steffan (absent)
Barbara Roddin
Garth Wales
Eric Clancy

TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS - PRESENT

Jennifer Boyer, Comm. Dev. Director
Scott Finkenbiner, Planning Technician

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Ginnie M. Anderson, Commissioner

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Willey called the Planning Commission Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all. Roll Call was taken by Mr. Finkenbiner. Vice-Chair Siodlowski and Mr. Steffan were noted as absent.

APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Chair Willey called for the approval of the Minutes of the February 27, and March 27, 2023 Planning Commission Meetings. Mr. Clancy made a **MOTION** to approve the Minutes of the February 27, and March 27, 2023 meetings. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Ms. Parrish. The motion carried unanimously (5-0).

REVIEW OF BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MINUTES

Chair Willey noted the copies of the Board of Commissioners Minutes from the March 1st and March 15th, 2023 meetings. Chair Willey accepted these minutes.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Consideration/Action on Amendment to Floodplain Regulations (Article X) within the Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 245)

Ms. Boyer presented an overview of the proposed changes to the floodplain regulations, explaining that Cumberland County and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have been working on floodplain ordinance updates since about 2019. Final maps are now ready for adoption, to remain compliant, the Township must maintain the flood plain ordinance at FEMA standards before the compliance date in September or the Township goes into default. The draft being presented has been reviewed by FEMA appointed representatives from the Pennsylvania Municipal League, staff from Cumberland County, and the draft is considered

compliant in its current unchanged state.

Mr. Clancy asked to confirm that the total number of homes in the floodplain would be reduced by approximately 137. Ms. Boyer answered that yes, the number is being reduced. Ms. Roddin asked if the residents who are being removed from or added to the floodplain know about the change. Ms. Boyer stated that in 2019 letters were sent out to residents who were changing floodplain status, getting out or in, and that the changes were in progress. The County provided an online searchable map that showed the 2009 floodplain map compared to the 2019 updates, and the Township has provided updates on its website.

Ms. Boyer began discussion about new construction and development in the floodplain; stating that currently, the Township allows new construction and development in the floodplain so long as the new structure meets the freeboard requirement of 18 inches above the base flood elevation. There is also the option of prohibiting any new development in the floodplain, however, Township staff is not recommending that option but would like to hear the Planning Commissions' opinion.

The next section discussed was accessory structures, Ms. Boyer explained that this was a new addition with this update and not in the current ordinance. The Township currently requires these structures to either be built outside of the floodplain or be raised to the freeboard height of 18 inches. The new option provided by FEMA allows, by right, accessory structures in the floodplain if they do not exceed 200 square feet, or structures up to 600 square feet if a variance is applied for, approved, and a non-conversion agreement is recorded in the deed. Also, FEMA does not have standards for fencing as an accessory structure, however, the Township considers fences accessory structures. Therefore, FEMA provided sample ordinances to use for writing fencing ordinance to allow fencing in the floodplain.

Ms. Boyer continued by presenting consideration of the use of fill in the floodplain. FEMA provided the option of prohibiting the use of fill entirely, however, FEMA also suggests providing a variance procedure to utilize fill. Currently the Township allows the use of fill and the criterion for the proposed variance is what the Township currently allows by right. Mr. Clancy notes that the variance process would allow for notification to neighbors who could then voice any concerns.

Finally, Ms. Boyer presented the newly added FEMA requirement concerning allowing the storage of recreational vehicles in the floodplain. Staff suggests prohibiting this altogether, due to the difficulty of enforcement and to maintain the current Township standard. The requirement states that any property in a hazard zone can only keep the vehicle on the property for fewer than 180 consecutive days. Therefore, unless the Township maintains an updated inventory of all recreational vehicles in the hazard zone and are doing regular checks of these vehicles to ensure they are not exceeding the 180 consecutive day requirement, it would be nearly impossible to enforce and prove the vehicle has been there for more or less than 180 days.

No Public Comment

No action was taken on the update, discussion will continue at the next meeting.

No public comment.

BUILDING INSPECTOR'S REPORTS

Chair Willey noted the Building Inspector's Report for March 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business. Chair Willey adjourned the meeting at 8:14 P.M.