

MINUTES OF
SPRING GARDEN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
February 4, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: The monthly meeting of the Spring Garden Township Planning Commission was held on February 4, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Robert Sandmeyer
Amy Mitten
Joel Sears
Scott Stevens

John DeHaas
Dawn Hansen, Zoning Officer
Dave Davidson, C.S. Davidson, Inc.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Joel Sears made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 4, 2025, meeting. Seconded by Scott Stevens. All in favor, motion carried.

ZONING HEARING APPLICATIONS: None

Subdivision/Land Development Plans:

Lot 86, Red Oaks at Regents Glen – Final Subdivision Land Development plan to build 72 single-family detached dwellings. This plan was tabled at the November 6, 2024, meeting until the secondary primary access plan could be resolved.

- Josh George and Dave Yohn represented the developer.
- They have made changes to the plan based on previous comments.
- They are proposing the use of the existing emergency access drive that has been in use since the 2005 recorded land development plan as a secondary ingress/egress access point to the Golf Course, White Oaks, and Red Oaks.
- They do not anticipate that this will be heavily used because it is not as convenient as using Golf Club Drive.
- They are proposing a gate with access controls like the other gates existing at the entrances to Regents Glen.
- The plan is very much the same other than addressing the planning commission's comments and the stormwater review comments.
- Mr. Sears was concerned about the volume of traffic competing to make a left turn onto Indian Rock Dam Rd off Golf Club Drive. He feels that if there is a high volume of traffic using that entrance, it would force other residents to use the secondary access, despite Mr. George's anticipation that it will not be used that frequently. It seems to be more of a practical issue rather than an emergency issue.
- Mr. George stated that since the last meeting in November, TRG completed a traffic study to include the Golf Club Drive entrance. He verified that neither the Engineer nor the Zoning Officer received a copy of the study that was completed last week.
- Jon Seitz from TRG found that the intersection at Indian Rock Dam Road and Golf Club Drive had level of service B for all the hourly traffic conditions. Essentially this means a delay of no more than 15 seconds to pull out which is very good in traffic.
- Mr. Davidson, the engineer, inquired as to the number of turning movements right and left.
- Mr. George did not have a copy of the report to answer, but would forward it over to Mr. Davidson.
- Mr. Davidson stated that it would give you a very different result if you had a 50/50 right turn movement versus a 90/10 which is what you would see at that intersection.

- The Zoning Officer asked if these numbers were based on current conditions, of which Mr. George answered yes.
- Mr. DeHaas asked for clarification if these numbers were with the anticipated amount of new housing or existing current conditions without the new housing.
- Mr. George said that TRG measured the current existing traffic in that area and then considered the development of Red Oaks, White Oaks, existing Sycamore Grove, and the Golf Club to provide the results.
- Ms. Mitten had concerns that the secondary access that requires cars to travel through the Golf Club parking lot and back out to Heritage Lane appears to still bring all the vehicles back out to the same access point on Indian Rock Dam Road. Does this emergency access from White Oaks provide another form of ingress/egress. She asked Mr. George to provide some clarification as the plan is not clear.
- Mr. George stated that Heritage Lane connects to Indian Rock Dam Road. The White Oaks emergency access drive is on the right. This will be widened from 20' to 24', it connects to Heritage Lane and then has a separate entrance onto Indian Rock Dam Road just north of Golf Club Drive across from Heritage Lane next to Lot 78 in Regents Glen. Heritage then continues south to Golf Club Drive, which goes out to Indian Rock Dam Rd.
- Mr. Davidson requested the width of the cartway of the proposed secondary access.
- Mr. George replied that it is currently 20' and they are proposing widening it to 24'.
- Mr. Davidson inquired if the crossing over the railroad tracks was permitted by the PUC.
- Mr. George replied that it was approved in 2005 and has been used for the last 20 years as an emergency access drive.
- Mr. Davidson stated that it was approved as a golf cart path. There is a difference between the use of an emergency access and golf cart path, versus a primary secondary point of access that would be open to the public. In Mr. Davidson's opinion, that would require PUC recognition.
- Mr. George responded that he would have his legal counsel discuss this and figure it out. He is not sure. It has been there for 20 years and has the same kind of concrete crossing at the railroad that it does at Golf Club Drive, so the physical construction is there to support the vehicular traffic.
- Mr. Davidson had concerns about opening that access up to the public, not as an emergency access.
- Mr. Yohn said his office is currently looking through the old records to locate the old documents approving that access. He said that could be made a condition.
- Mr. Davidson said that it would be easier to call the PUC to see if they have a permit on record for that crossing.
- Mr. Yohn said they are working on it.
- Anne Gray, Spring Garden Township resident and Commissioner, commented that all traffic going into the development would still have to go through the round about at Golf Club Drive to access their homes.
- Mr. George fully expects most traffic to use Golf Club Drive but would have the option to use the secondary point of access. The practical situation of going directly through Golf Club Drive is much simpler than driving through the Golf Club parking lot and out to Heritage Lane to Indian Rock Dam Road.
- The spirit of this is to provide secondary access that has been part of the discussion for many months and even part of the White Oaks plan that was recorded last year. We are providing it even though we don't feel anyone will really use it.
- Mr. Yohn said that the new gate will have a proximity reader that will be provided to all residents of White Oaks and Red Oaks. If you don't have the device on your car, you will not be able to use that gate to enter the area. You will be able to leave but not enter.

- The Zoning Officer inquired if there will be measures such as speed bumps installed in the parking lot of the Golf Club to require drivers to slow down and look for pedestrians and golf carts while driving through the area?
- Mr. George said he has no objections to doing that, but he runs in the area and there is no way to go fast in the parking lot. It doesn't seem likely that it will be a problem. There will be stop signs at the rail trail to allow pedestrians to cross just like at the Golf Club Drive entrance.
- The Zoning Officer also asked if there would be a separate golf cart path now, or if they would be using the same drive.
- Mr. George said it will be a shared road.
- Mr. Davidson commented that this is not what he envisioned as a secondary access. The Zoning Officer agreed.
- Mr. George stated that it all comes down to the traffic study that shows definitively that the access on Golf Club Drive works very well at all times of day. This part of the discussion going back to White Oaks where there was not sufficient data to show that, now that we have that we feel confident that Golf Club Drive will be more than adequate to provide ingress/egress for all residents and golf course patrons.
- Mr. George will forward a copy of the traffic study to the Engineer and Zoning Officer.
- Ms. Mitten requested the E & S Plan and Mr. Davidson said he will need this plan.
- Mr. George said they are forthcoming as there was a delay in getting the original documents for White Oaks. The permit is being amended due to transfer of ownership.
- Mr. Davidson asked about removing the bollards at the emergency access to use this as a secondary access.
- Mr. George stated that the chain will go away and there will be a gate to control access.
- Mr. Davidson said that from the Golf Club to the cul-de-sac on Golf Club Drive everything beyond that is still on a dead-end street. They loop around but it is a long cul-de-sac.
- Mr. George said there is a continuous loop if you use the emergency access roads.
- Mr. Davidson said this is if you use the Golf Club parking lot.
- Mr. George stated that you come in the Golf Club parking lot, ultimately tie into the cul-de-sac, but there is the connection that was just built for emergency vehicles that runs parallel to the railroad and ties into the cul-de-sac at White Oaks.
- Mr. Davidson stated that access is not public access. From the public access point of view, from the public access point on Golf Club Drive to the driveway at the golf club it is still a single piece of street that serves both White Oaks and Red Oaks.
- Mr. Davidson asked what the distance is from the Golf Club entrance to the center of the Golf Club Drive cul-de-sac.
- Mr. George estimated about 272-310 feet.
- Mr. Davidson pointed out that a blockage in that area would isolate both Red Oaks and White Oaks.
- Mr. George stated that Joe Madzelan of YAUFR already approved the emergency access.
- Mr. Davidson's primary concern is the amount of traffic going out on to Indian Rock Dam Rd. If the secondary access is useable, it gives people an additional way out. It does not meet the letter but the spirit of the request.
- Mr. Sandmeyer asked how emergency services will be able to get through this access.
- Mr. Yohn stated that the gate at the secondary access will have a proximity reader to allow traffic to enter.
- The Zoning Officer would still like the PUC or railroad sign off that they are ok with this being used as a primary access not just an emergency access or golf cart path.
- Mr. DeHaas asked if the zoning officer received a copy of the approval letter from Joe Madzelan.

- The Zoning Officer confirmed that she had received it, and Mr. Madzellan approves of the emergency access but did not review the secondary access.
- Mr. Yohn pointed out that Red Oaks and White Oaks will combine HOA's once both developments are completed. The Zoning Officer said that it should be a part of the Declarations and Covenants.
- Mr. DeHaas asked if there is still a staff meeting prior to the Planning Committee meeting. The Zoning Officer affirmed. Mr. DeHaas has concerns that everything was done last minute, such as the traffic study that no one was provided, the solution for the secondary access has both the Engineer and Zoning Officer surprised.
- Mr. George argued that the traffic study shows that the secondary access is not needed, and they are only providing it because the commissioners requested it.
- Mr. DeHaas is surprised that the staff is surprised by the solution that has been presented.
- Mr. George stated the last meeting was November and there is not another staff meeting held after he planning commission meets. They made the changes based on the comments provided at the last meeting.
- Mr. DeHaas is disappointed that there is no current approval from the PUC, and he understands they are working on it. It seems that there are constant changes and surprises each time they come in. The Planning Commission should have a letter from the PUC, and a copy of the traffic study before it goes to the Commissioners.
- Mr. George explained that this plan was introduced over 30 years ago and things have changed so there is a lot to go over to present it today.
- Ms. Mitten is concerned that any plans that are approved today with waivers will cause problems in the future for homeowners that have issues with developments that do not work for future growth.
- Mr. Yohn said the HOA will handle those situations.
- Mr. Sandmeyer posed the question about what happens if the PUC denies using the path over the railroad tracks as a secondary access.
- Mr. Yohn stated that it is the developer's problem. Make that a condition of approval.
- Mr. Sandmeyer stated that then the Board of Commissioners must deal with it.
- Mr. George pointed out that the secondary access is not an ordinance requirement. It was required as part of the White Oaks project.
- Mr. Sandmeyer stated that it is part of the traffic study that the Board has not seen. If there is something wrong with the traffic study that he hasn't seen he does not want to recommend approval.
- The Zoning Officer mentioned that other than the waivers and administrative comments the only outstanding issues are the secondary access and PUC approval.
- Ms. Mitten pointed out that the E & S Plan is a requirement of the final plan. That will be needed for the engineer to recommend financial security.
- Mr. Davidson mentioned that, depending on the secondary access, that will also be needed for a recommendation of security, so the secondary access needs to be resolved first. Currently it is dependent upon what the Railroad says.
- Mr. Davidson took a quick look at the traffic study that Mr. George emailed him. The existing traffic study shows 90% left, 10% right but for future shows 70/30. I think those numbers have been worked a little bit. He would like to review the study further and talk to Jon Seitz about it.
- Mr. DeHaas asked if anyone from TRG was present. He wondered how anyone can say that adding many new homes would not affect the traffic flow dynamically. The change is dynamic. He can't understand why the percentages would change.
- Mr. Sandmeyer asked about the NPDES permit.
- Mr. George answered that County Conservation asked for a joint permit for both Red Oaks and White Oaks. That is the reason that it is taking so long to get it approved, because it is a major amendment.

- Mr. Davidson wanted to add another condition regarding the sanitary sewer lines. He is concerned that the proximity of the sanitary sewer lines exiting the site to the adjacent dwellings (units 28-30 and 21-32). In both cases the sewer is between 8 and 13 feet deep, about half of which is fill material. He would like to see the sewers centered between the adjacent units.
- Mr. Sandmeyer made a motion to recommend approval of the Board of Commissioners with the following conditions:

Waivers:

1. A waiver for preliminary plan approval has been requested. (§275-21, SALDO)
2. A waiver for street width has been requested. (§275-29, SALDO)
3. A waiver for street radii has been requested. (§275-39.C(1), SALDO)
4. A waiver for dead-end streets has been requested (§275-29, SALDO)
5. Waiver for Max depth for stormwater basin of 6 feet has been requested. (§265-306.R.1.a, SWM)
6. Waiver for maximum side slope on stormwater basin has been requested (§265-306.R.1.a, SWM)
7. A waiver for Section 02575 - Bituminous surface street cross-section – 8 inches of PennDot 2A stone has been requested.

Conditions:

8. Name and seal of the registered professional engineer or surveyor responsible for the plan, attesting to the fact that survey data and plans are correct. (§275-24.C(5), SALDO)
9. Owner's notarized signature (§275-24.C(22), SALDO)
10. A second point of access should be provided (§275-29G, SALDO). As noted in General Notes (2) on the recorded White Oaks Plan, "Any development plans for proposed Lot 86 shall not be approved by Spring Garden Township prior to the owner/developer resolving a secondary primary access to the development with Spring Garden Township." A letter from the Railroad should be provided showing permission to allow passenger vehicles and local delivery trucks over the railroad. Having golf cart access is different than passenger vehicle/delivery truck vehicles. This access will need to conform to street specifications.
11. A Development Agreement, prepared by the Township's solicitor, shall be executed, and recorded by the Township prior to the release of the Plan for recording (§275-52, SALDO).
12. An agreement detailing the responsibility for the emergency access serving both Red Oaks and White Oaks should be detailed as either a note on the plan or as part of the Developer Agreement.
13. Declarations and Covenants should be provided to show how the "footprint" lots will be conveyed. (§275-6, SALDO) A declaration plan will be prepared and recorded after recordation of this Land Development Plan. This will show the portion of the property to be conveyed to each home buyer along with any portion of the property that will be a common element or limited common element.
14. Security for proposed improvements (sewers, landscaping, stormwater, streets, lighting, erosion control) must be posted before final plan approval (§275-24.D.5, SALDO)
15. Recreation fee-in-lieu shall be paid to the Township prior to plan recordation (§275-38 SALDO).
16. Stormwater management approval (§265 Stormwater Management)
17. An approved E & S Plan shall be provided. (§275-23A, SALDO)
18. The proximity of the sanitary sewer lines exiting the site to the adjacent dwellings (units 28-30 and 21-32). In both cases the sewer is between 8 and 13 feet deep, about half of which is fill material. The sewers shall be centered between the adjacent units.
19. The Engineer should review/approve the Traffic study provided by TRG.

- Mr. Sears seconded the motion.
- Public Comment:
 - Eric Kinard, 1539 Heritage Lane – He works for PennDOT in the permitting office and wants to know the logic behind the secondary access. If the level of service at Golf Club Drive is level B that is exceptional, and it does not seem that a secondary access would be necessary. He is more concerned that if traffic is going out Heritage Lane to Indian Rock Dam Road that will cause more issues with two exits onto Indian Rock Dam Road. He would like to see that secondary access as ingress only, not egress.
 - Ms. Mitten answered that it is to provide an additional point of access for convenience and future growth.
 - Mr. Davidson said that egress is the issue. There are 250 homes on Golf Club Drive competing to get out on Indian Rock Dam Road primarily turning left that is going to be tough. He needs to review the traffic study.
 - Anne Gray, 1471 Sleepy Hollow Rd asked what type of home they will be.
 - Mr. George said they will be a two-story single-family home with garages.
 - Ms. Gray would prefer to see the secondary access from the loop road to Indian Rock Dam through Heritage Lane, not through the cul-de-sac onto Golf Club Drive that then connects to Heritage Lane. Regarding the development of this family-oriented development there is no recreation being provided. Why is a waiver being provided.
 - The Zoning Officer explained that the ordinance requires that they either pay a fee-in-lieu of dedicated recreation space or dedicated recreation space. The developer gets to choose.
 - Dan Rooney, 1512 Third Ave. As a member of The Board of Commissioners the secondary access was requested because the Code calls for the plan to have a healthy distribution of traffic. If Golf Club Drive becomes blocked off, we would prefer another option for egress. Future traffic on Indian Rock Dam Road to 2035. The Cul-de-sac length is 500 feet, we still have a cul-de-sac that exceeds 500 feet. The whole development is one long cul-de-sac. It does not meet the intent of the secondary ingress/egress. We do not want a secondary access that is close to the primary access. The emergency access path would make a better secondary access.
- Mr. Sandmeyer commented that he feels the Board is looking at practicality and numbers. He thinks that a secondary access is warranted to make for a good plan that will provide a better flow for both developments.
- Mr. Sears pointed out that the Board of Commissioners placed this condition, and it is on them to decide if it is still required. It is about more than a traffic study. It may help the residents feel better about the plan.
- Mr. Rooney asked if the road going through the parking lot will meet the same road construction requirements as the rest of the roads in the development.
- Mr. Davidson said the ordinance would have to meet the standard construction requirements but not the geometry requirements.
- Dave Hoffman, 1574 Heritage Lane is a representative of the HOA Board. Their concern is that the emergency access road as a secondary road will be used more frequently by people exiting the golf club as it is a more direct route. People in the development do not obey the stop signs now. It is very dangerous and there have been many near misses. This is going to be more hidden, and he feels it will be more dangerous.
- Mr. DeHaas asked for the motion to be repeated.
- Mr. Sandmeyer repeated the motion.
- Vote 4 yay, 1 nay – John DeHaas voting against recommendation. Motions passed.

- **OTHER BUSINESS: None**

With no further business to address, motion to adjourn by Joel Sears, seconded by Scott Stevens. All in favor.
The meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dawn Hansen, Zoning Officer

Approved