

COOLBAUGH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORK SESSION MINUTES
June 20, 2023

The work session was called to order by Vice-Chair Lynn Kelly at 6:00pm in the Coolbaugh Township Municipal Center located at 5520 Municipal Drive, Tobyhanna, PA.

Board Members present:

Lynn Kelly, Alma I. Ruiz-Smith, and Clare Colgan

Board Members absent:

William Weimer and Cara Rogan

Staff present:

Patrick Armstrong, Solicitor, Erin Masker, Township Secretary, Meredith Thompson, Business Manager, Darren Dixon, Controller, Tomas Keane, Director of Codes and Zoning and Clinton Oddy, Code Enforcement Officer

Staff absent:

None

1. Discussion on Monroe County Model Ordinance for Warehouse/ Distribution Centers

Ms. Kelly stated that we are all aware of what is going on throughout the county with all the warehouses and distribution centers that are being built. Ms. Kelly asked if the Board had any comments on the provided model ordinance from the county with Ms. Ruiz-Smith stating that she has a question on the section that references the state highway. Solicitor Armstrong stated that the Board adopted a new ordinance which he stated has a definition that is very similar to that in the model ordinance, the only difference is the special provisions for the DC and Truck Terminals. Ms. Kelly stated that she has been following other municipalities and the ordinances that they have drafted and stated that she would like to see an option in our ordinance for a small warehouse (25,000 sq. ft and less) and a large warehouse (over 25,000 sq. ft). She also stated that she would like provisions included for truck trips, the number of dock doors and to tighten up the definitions in our ordinance to ensure that what is being built fits within a certain set of guidelines. Ms. Colgan stated that she would like to do some more research on the size of the warehouse, stating that 25,000 sq. ft seems like it may be too small and stating that she would also like to see the definitions tightened up. She stated that previous boards left us in a precarious situation and all we can do now is make the necessary revisions as the times are changing. Discussion took place on the roads and the ability for them to handle the trucks based on the width and current condition. Ms. Kelly stated that this will be a bit of a process and that there will be more discussion to come, calling for public comment.

- **Discussion:** L. Buckholtz stated that she is in attendance in support of the residents and understands their concerns. She stated that the infrastructure that is in Coolbaugh Township not only affects your residents but stated that it bleeds down and affects others. She stated that Coolbaugh Township may have the roads to sustain it but the impacts will be felt by everyone and on the roads of other municipalities the same as the impacts to the waterways. Bridget Meyer and Abby Jones were in attendance from Penn Future discussing their draft ordinance that they have worked on stating that they would like to provide a copy to the Board for review. B. Meyer stated that their ordinance incorporates truck trips, size of the building and the number of dock doors to help municipalities determine what type of building it will be without knowing the tenant since that is usually one of the last pieces of information that is available. A. Jones stated that determining the definitions will also allow the Board to best determine where they would like the warehouses located in the township. She stated that their goal is to provide an ordinance with well-defined definitions that will give everyone, residents, developers, and board members a clear understanding. J. Miller thanked the Board and stated that he agrees with the representatives from Penn Future stating that we saw what happened at the ZHB hearing when definitions are not specific. He stated that he encourages the Board to partner with Penn Future and other experts in the field to ensure that no future lawyers can use our own ordinance against us.

Ms. Ruiz-Smith stated that we have Carson Helfrich who is one of our professionals in writing our ordinances and stated that we can work with him as well. Solicitor Armstrong stated that the hearing that is before the ZHB is based under the old ordinance and not the current ordinance. M. Hintelmann asked what will happen when there are 200 buses on the roads when school is in session, and we are adding all the additional truck traffic. A resident discussed long term and short-term locations relating to the distance of travel to and from the highway, stating that the warehouses should be located closer to the interstates as the roads are not able to handle the extra traffic.

2. Public Input

J. Miller stated that at a previous meeting Mr. Weimer mentioned the concept of trying to put some land into open space and encouraged the Board to work with DCNR, Pocono Heritage Trust and other organizations to obtain grants for this purpose. He stated that the Board could also ask the taxpayers if they want to pay a little extra out of pocket to purchase land for open space as a one-time tax. He stated that in the past Ms. Ruiz-Smith has said it and maybe we should do it, saying when in doubt, buy it out.

Work Session ended at 6:44pm.