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A row in Rosemont over rezoning

By Sam Strike

The Radnor Township Planning Commission on Monday tabled its discussion on the proposed Garrett Hill Zoning District documents, partly because a major landowner has asked to be excluded from the proposed district.

This was the second time the commission has seen proposed zoning and subdivision changes to the town of Garrett Hill (part of Rosemont), but this time around members seem more preoccupied with certain issues.

"When we saw this months ago and voted on it, we were told... that all the neighbors were involved and all the neighbors were in favor. There were no issues," said member Edward DiMarcantonio. "There are major issues here tonight... [with] one of the larger landowners in your neighborhood on everything from the height of lights to what's included and what's not to be included."

That larger landowner is Steve Bajus, a real-estate developer and manager whose company owns the Rosemont Business Campus on Conestoga Road.

Shortly before the proposed zoning changes were set for a vote by the Board of Commissioners in September, Bajus publicly stated that the plans

were "a recipe for decay" and that part of the zoning changes is tantamount to eminent domain.

He recently asked to have his property removed from the proposed zoning district, something the Garrett Hill Steering Committee, the group of community members that crafted the proposal, is against.

Rick Barker, chair of the steering committee, responded to DiMarcantonio's comments on the surprising array of outstanding issues by saying, "This was a very public process that took place over a long period of time... Mr. Bajus was well aware that those meetings took place across the street."

He said the community is in favor of the zoning changes, which aim to keep the current size and scale of Garrett Hill, and thought that "perhaps all the work we had done was teetering on the edge simply because of one or two people in the community who were dissatisfied with this."

Bajus presented the planners with a list of items he finds problematic, including the implementation of maximum lot widths, which would prohibit by-right lot consolidation.

Barker has said that items like that serve as the backbone of the zoning plan for a community that currently does not want large-scale commercial or residential

buildings.

Bajus also brought up the issue of site amenities that property owners will have to pay for if and when they redevelop a property. While he said that making developers fix sidewalks or change to standardized lighting, for example, is not unusual, he said in the case of Garrett Hill as proposed, property owners would get nothing in return.

"Wayne has *quid pro quo*," said Bajus of the recent Wayne Business Overlay District, which he helped craft. "If you want to have people redevelop, you have to give them incentives to do it."

Bajus, the longtime owner of Haverford Square and other shopping centers, spoke about the ideal creation of a commercial area and how to accomplish it.

Barker countered his points with one sentence: "The difference between what Steve's talking about and what we've done in Garrett Hill is the difference between a community plan and a shopping center."

The township has not yet decided whether to include Bajus' business campus in the new district. Bajus also owns two residential properties in Garrett Hill.