

Forks planners pan development

LARGER-SCALE PLANS had been rejected earlier. Thursday vote was 6-0.

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FORKS TWP. | In August, the planning commission took a stand against a developer's plans for 837 homes in the farmland protection district.

And Thursday night, the commission offered a similar piece of advice: Reject a scaled-down plan from the same developer for about 187 homes on the land, planning commission member Erik Chuss said.

The commission voted 6-0 Thursday night to reject the plan from a partnership of developers including Nic Zawarski and Sons, board member Dean Turner said. James Wideman said he abstained because his property borders the project.

Plans call for single-family homes on 2-acre lots on about 436 acres along Richmond Road, planners said.

For Turner, a list of highly technical concerns in a letter from the township engineer factored into the vote.

"He usually gives us a one-page letter," Turner said. "This was a three-page letter of things that didn't meet the requirements."

Among the gripes, the letter argues developers failed to perform soil tests, slopes appear incorrectly on drawings and the

THUMBS DOWN

The Forks Township planning commission recommended Thursday against approving a 187-home plan submitted for 400-plus acres along Richmond Road.

stormwater plan needs tweaking, Turner said. Chuss argued the plans weren't ready for an Aug. 10 deadline for a decision.

Planners said the developer did not send a representative to Thursday's meeting. Dennis Benner, a spokesman for the developer, could not be reached for comment at his office late Thursday night.

The planning commission is a recommending body. Supervisors render final decisions on plans. If supervisors approve the plans, old zoning laws apply.

But if supervisors reject the plan, the developers must return with a version that conforms to new zoning laws approved in February, Chuss said.

In February, supervisors boosted the minimum lot size from two to three acres in the farmland protection district. Because developers submitted their plans for a development with 2-acre lots before the change, the new laws don't apply.

A cluster option allows homes on 1-acre lots as long as

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half the land remains open space.

The advice to reject the plan comes as supervisors prepare to

fight a zoning challenge from the same developers. The companies want to build more than 3,000 homes on about 545 acres they control. Applicants include Bethlehem-based Nic Zawarski and Sons Developers Inc., Nic Zawarski and Sons Development Corp., Bucks-Lehigh Land

Co. LLC and KMRD LP, according to the application.

Zoning hearings are scheduled for August.

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