

6. Progress Report and Discussion – Township Trail Planning

Ms. Liggett handed out copies of the letter prepared for property owners along the proposed Township trail. This letter was to gauge interest from the owners if they would even consider an easement through their property for a public hiking trail. The proposed route would start near Tom's Lane and end near Sportsmens Club Lane and would cross the properties of the following people:

- Klaus Keller and Irene Schaperio
- Steven and Raelene Mellot Jr
- Joseph and Jennifer Wiker
- Scott and Yvonne Smith

Ms. Steele asked to add a first paragraph citing significant public interest in and BOS support for hike/bike trails and recreation areas. Mr. Eberhart mentioned that the letter did not specify if the Township was seeking to purchase an easement or asking for property donation. Mr. May said that was in an earlier draft, but he had asked Ms. Liggett to remove the text and use the letter to gauge interest only. Mr. May said they would make these changes and send out the letters on Township letterhead.

Mr. Eberhart asked if money for the trail could come from the Open Space program as a lease. Ms. Steele said it would be an eligible expense, but the Township could only own it for 2 years. Her suggestion was to find out if owners were interested, and then use enhancement money. If the Township would eventually own the property, enhancement money could be available for land acquisition. Discussion continued that Tom's Lane and the current termination near Sportsmens Club Lane were not public access roads. This would need to be resolved, since citizens would need access to the public trail.

7. Regional Planning Projects Update and Outlook

Mr. May discussed the work currently being done at the regional level (i.e., CRPC). He reviewed the following projects:

- a. Joint Articles of Agreement Review: The Joint Articles is an agreement of 6 participating municipalities that authorizes the Centre Regional Planning Commission to act on their behalf. The most recent revision to the agreement was in 1986. Mr. May said it was a good time to refine and clean up this agreement and streamline processes.
- b. Comprehensive Plan: The CRPC staff has not kept up with their proposed schedule. They will hold more community meetings in the spring to discuss goals, objectives, and policies. At previous meetings, there was a disappointing level of community participation; the new website will be more interactive and hopefully will encourage increased community participation in the future. The new target for completion of the Comprehensive Plan would be December 2011.
- c. Economic Development Assessment: While drafting the work program for the Comprehensive Plan, CRPA staff realized there was no economic development element. *(Mr. May had provided an earlier update during the 9/7/10 PC meeting.)* The CRPA received funds from the General Forum and

- hired a consultant three months ago. Several goals of the Assessment are (1) to help encourage revitalization and reuse of aging commercial centers inside the regional growth boundary, (2) to strengthen the CRPA's working relationship with the Chamber, the CBICC and the Industrial Development Authority, and (3) work with UAJAA for marketing beneficial use water. Mr. Tylka asked what is typically done by municipalities to attract businesses. Mr. May said that Pennsylvania has a good state economic development strategy, but there currently is not a regional strategy. In the future, local governments could get the businesses they want by pushing quality of life issues for workers, etc. Mr. May hopes to integrate this into one process. They are working with Penn State to develop and strengthen incubators to capitalize on research and turn it into practical applications or jobs. He anticipates fourteen recommendations coming out of this study. It is getting more difficult to attract businesses to come here in a challenging economy. This initiative would be pro-growth on "our" terms. Discussion continued on preserving the industry of agriculture and farming, not just preserving the farm land itself. Mr. May said the CRPA is halfway through this study and hopes to have results by February 2011.
- d. Assessment of COG TLU (Transportation Land Use) Committee and CRPC working relationship: A few years ago, COG reorganized their committees and changed the Transportation Committee to the TLU committee. The Centre Region Planning Commission already existed and dealt with land use issues. Mr. May said this was a good time to figure out boundaries between the TLU committee and CRPC, keeping elected officials involved but also keeping the planning process outside the political arena.
 - e. Development of Regional Impact Process: Mr. May distributed PowerPoint slide notes. The Development of Regional Impact Process was created several years ago to deal with changes to the regional growth boundary and projects inside the RGB with a regional impact. The purpose was to guide growth and use water and transportation systems more efficiently.
 - The current expansion process is initiated at the municipal level, moves on to CRPA review and CRPC recommendation, and then to the General Forum for their action. Any petition to expand the RGB must achieve a unanimous unit vote.
 - Mr. May handed out a map from 2006. The red areas were requests for property parcels to come into the RGB (3,000 acres). The General Forum only approved 347 acres into the RGB. Mr. Tylka asked what owners receive if their properties fall inside the growth boundary. Mr. May said the most important issue is sewer; you can develop at a higher/urban density.
 - In 2010, the only active request is the Whitehall Road Regional Park, adjacent to the Penn State property off of Whitehall Road and Blue Course Drive. The public sewer extension is due to its environmentally sensitive location, even though it has a low demand for sewer. DEP is requiring an expansion of the RGB if public sewer is expanded to this location.

- What's missing in this process? Currently, there are no evaluations of the land to determine if it is the right type to support growth, no required demonstrated need for expansion, no planning of where growth should and should not occur, and no accurate assessment of impacts.
- Why now? The economic climate allows it, because there are few requests to enter the RGB, and there is a sufficient inventory of land. UAJA said that sewer is not currently an issue because there is still capacity at the plant to support growth. This is the best time to review the DRI process, before the RGB reaches full capacity.
- Options are to keep things the same, change the frequency of submissions to twice a year, and put less emphasis on numbers/more emphasis on quality of place.
- Next steps in 2011 for the CRPC and the TLU are to make some changes, identify areas of growth, and maintain a regional perspective on growth.

Mr. Eberhart said that Halfmoon did not ask for an RGB expansion for Grays Woods in 2006. Mr. May and Ms. Liggett explained that growth happening outside the RGB required the DRI to inform "others" but wouldn't change the RGB itself. Mr. Finkelstein asked why Mr. Maloney would not ask for UAJA for his development. Mr. May explained that to get UAJA, Mr. Maloney would have to ask the Township to expand the RGB for that specific property. The whole Township itself would not be eligible for the RGB.

8. Staff Update

Ms. Liggett accepted the Senior Planner position for Halfmoon Township! Mr. May informed the PC about the hiring process for Harris Township. The Senior Planner position will be posted on the state and national APA website starting on December 13. The application process ends in January 14, and if a local candidate is hired, that person can be installed quickly. Ms. Liggett will transition from Harris Township to Halfmoon Township over the next few months. Mr. Vorwald and Mr. May will continue to help, and hopefully Ms. Liggett will begin permanent work with Halfmoon Township in February 2011.

9. Adjournment

Motion. Mr. Nauman moved to adjourn. Mr. Eberhart seconded. Vote: 4-0.

NOTE: The next meeting will be on December 21 and is tentatively planned as an informal pre-holiday gathering at the Township Building. Members should bring a dish to share.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Gartner
Recording Secretary