

**HALFMOON TOWNSHIP**  
**Planning Commission Meeting**  
**November 19, 2013 7:00 pm**

Present: Danelle Del Corso, Bob Eberhart, Jordan Finkelstein, Lorin Nauman, John Stevens  
Absent: Sam Evans  
Others present: D. J. Liggett, CRPA; Susan Steele, Township Manager; Melissa Gartner, recording secretary

**1. Call To Order**

Chair Ms. Del Corso called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

**2. Citizen Comments**

None

**3. Approval of November 12, 2013 Minutes**

Motion. Mr. Nauman moved to approve the minutes of November 12, 2013. Mr. Stevens seconded. Vote: 5-0.

**4. Reports**

a. BOS Update

Ms. Liggett reported that the BOS met on November 14. She said they discussed the budget and the COG budget, but she was not in attendance.

b. Zoning Officer's Report

None. Ms. Liggett noted that Ms. Steele has been appointed as the Assternate Zoning Officer. Because Mr. Piper also works for Mease Engineering, he cannot sign plans submitted by his other employer. As Alternate Zoning Officer, Ms. Steele can now sign plans as well.

c. CRPC Update

There was no CRPC meeting this week.

d. Open Space Board Update

Mr. Eberhart reported that the OSB will meet on Wednesday, November 20.

**5. Official Map – Revisit Proposed Amendments**

Ms. Del Corso and Ms. Liggett summarized the previous discussions on additions to the Official Map. On the eastern end of the Township, there are two proposed trails, one of which branches into a third trail. One trail comes off of Sawmill Road, runs through property that belongs to Grays Woods, and connects to the Grays Woods Path. A second trail comes off of Sawmill Road, crosses the Grays Woods property, and connects to the Heritage Trail. Another trail connects to the Heritage Trail Parkway and runs right through Grays Woods Park in Patton Township. One of

these will connect to Wood Thrush Way (which passes the town center). Ms. Liggett also showed an enlarged park area on the map, which is adjacent to Grays Woods Park and includes a nearby storm water basin. Mr. Nauman asked if there should be another connection from Sawmill Road to the park for ingress/egress. Ms. Liggett said discussions during the Halfmoon/Patton Area Plan meetings focused on making road connections locally convenient but regionally inconvenient. Residents wanted to avoid speedways, so they might not support more direct connections to their park.

Ms. Liggett explained the process for the Official Map approval: the map will go from the PC back to the BOS, the BOS will set a public hearing date, and then the Official Map goes back through the public process for comments. It will go to the CRPC, the County Planning Commission, and Patton Township (because some Halfmoon roads will connect to Patton roads).

Ms. Liggett said the Grays Woods park in Patton Township is in development, but the residential phases 5 and 6 are planned for the future. Mr. Eberhart asked if the master plan for the Grays Woods community in Patton Township had been approved, and Ms. Liggett said it was.

After discussion, PC members decided on recommending the following proposed paths to be added to the Official Map:

- a. extending from Sawmill Road through the Grays Woods property to Grays Woods path
- b. extending from Sawmill Road to Heritage Trail Road
- c. extending from Sawmill Road to Heritage Trail Parkway, and
- d. extending from Sawmill Road to Ironwood Drive in Patton Township

Mr. Eberhart asked if the Act 153 properties were going to be included in the Official Map, and Ms. Liggett said her recommendation to the BOS was not to include them since they were not permanent easements and the properties could be changed if an owner took the 10% exception to develop. The Planning Commission agreed. The Wildlife Corridor is a permanent easement and will be added to the Official Map. She added that the Act 153 properties are shown on both the Future Land Use Map and the Open Space Map.

Motion. Mr. Nauman moved to include the road and trail connectors discussed this evening to the Official Map. Mr. Stevens seconded. Vote: 5-0.

## **6. Regional Rural Zoning District Analysis**

Ms. Del Corso reviewed the CRPA staff Zoning Analysis Report, which identifies inconsistencies in local rural zoning. Ms. Liggett said this project started because of some concern for the potential of high density development occurring outside the RGB. Traditionally, the regional planning focus has been to encourage growth inside the RGB and keep the area outside the RGB more rural. However, there are many zoning districts and land uses outside the RGB that are not appropriate for areas with no urban services. For example, while there are many small rural churches that fit into the rural character of their community, churches are now expanding their operations into 24-hour facilities that are inconsistent with the agricultural zoning district. This is what prompted the CRPA to examine the zoning districts outside the RGB and compare them to with the surrounding rural character.

Ms. Liggett explained that since Halfmoon is located completely outside the RGB, it has a long list of uses that may be inconsistent with the agriculture zoning district. For example, taxi and limousine services, public garages, ambulance stations, radio

towers, and retail establishments are more suitable for urbanized areas inside the RGB. If municipalities permit such uses outside the RGB, the analysis recommends that they attach some conditions to limit the size and scale of development to reduce their impact on the rural environment.

Ms. Steele reminded the PC that this is an advisory document, designed to start discussion among municipalities about whether any of these suggestions might be practical to implement.

Ms. Liggett suggested reviewing the document, especially the introductory paragraphs and the Halfmoon land uses. She noted that one thing that stands out in the report is the potential for an additional 8,000 dwelling units under current zoning in Halfmoon Township. Mr. Nauman noted that it would only be 4,000 units because of the 50% open land requirement, but others mentioned that the RPD allows a property owner to have the original number of lots on decreased lot sizes to preserve the 50% in open land. Ms. Steele noted that the PC is considering eliminating the RPD (which is the only zoning district requiring the dedication of 50% open land).

Ms. Steele said that Trotter Farm was done under RPD. However, it did not achieve the intended RPD purpose. The retention ponds and replacement septic areas are in the open land area and the entire open area can be developed below the surface level, so it is not true open land.

## **7. Future Land Use Map – Options for Implementation**

### **A. Agricultural Zoning District**

Ms. Del Corso reviewed the changes to the Agricultural Zoning District as shown in the Zoning Uses Comparison chart. Mr. Finkelstein asked why some sports were listed specifically and others were not in the list of recreational facilities. Members decided that the definition of recreational facilities needs to be refined in the future. They also conducted a long discussion on the need for farmers to repair their own machinery and the merits of side businesses as part of a farming operation.

When members questioned allowing farmers to subdivide their properties, Mr. Eberhart said that people should be able to subdivide for their children. Members decided on the following changes to the Agricultural Zoning District:

- remove Recreational facilities from Permitted uses and keep it in Conditional uses,
- move ‘Machine shop...’ to C1,
- remove ‘Uses/equipment for processing natural resources’ from the A1 permitted uses,
- remove ‘Yard storage...’ from A1 and keep it in M1,
- remove ‘Mobile home park’ and move it to the new PCD zone to be specified later, and
- remove community sewage treatment plants from the list, because it would be covered under public utilities.

Members decided to keep ‘Commercial wind energy facilities’ in A1. They also suggested adding some wording regarding the commercial aspect to the definitions of Machine shop, etc.” and “Repair shops, etc.”

### **B. Summary of Uses and Zoning Districts**

Throughout the discussions, members decided that the proposed R2 zoning district will need to be revisited in the future to determine if an R2 zoning district is actually needed, or should be folded into the proposed PCD.

**8. Matter of Record**

- PC meetings are scheduled for December 3 and 17. Ms. Del Corso suggested cancelling these since Thanksgiving is late this year. She offered to e-mail members and coordinate the holiday party.  
Motion. Mr. Nauman moved to cancel the PC meetings on December 3 and 17. Mr. Stevens seconded. Vote: 5-0.
- This is Mr. Eberhart's last meeting as a PC member. He plans to submit his comments and thoughts on the Township to the PC members for their consideration.

**9. Adjournment**

Motion. Mr. Stevens moved to adjourn. Mr. Finkelstein seconded. Vote: 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Melissa Gartner  
Recording Secretary