

HALFMOON TOWNSHIP
Planning Commission Meeting
March 17, 2015

Present: Jason Little, Chair; Danelle Del Corso, Lorin Nauman, Sam Evans,

Others present: D. J. Liggett, CRPA; John Lichman, State College Borough Water Authority; Brian Heiser, State College Borough Water Authority; Katie Ombalski, ClearWater Conservancy; Larry Fennessey, PSU Stormwater Engineer; Nicole Gross, Recording Secretary

Not Present: Melissa Gartner, John Stevens

1. Call To Order

Chair, Mr. Little called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Citizen Comments

None

3. Approval of February 17, 2015 Minutes

Ms. Del Corso moved to approve the February 17, 2015 minutes. Mr. Nauman seconded. Vote in favor: 5-0.

4. Clear Water Conservancy

- a. Katie Ombalski : Clear Water Conservancy
 - i. Pitch Pine – Scrub Oak barrens
 - 1. Less Productive soils
 - 2. Stressed growing environment
 - 3. Uniquely adapted assemblage of plant and wildlife species
 - 4. Often early successional forest type
 - 5. Habitat management done through logging.
 - 6. 12 Species to be concerned about
 - ii. Scotia Barrens is area of concern for geological issues
 - 1. State Game Lands 176 (Scotia Range) is an important mammal area with Appalachian cottontails (need scrub oak found in the game lands) and educational long-term research on mammal conservation
 - 2. Important Bird Area Program (Birdlife International and Pennsylvania Audubon)
 - a. Migratory staging areas
 - b. Winter feeding area
 - c. Have rare, threatened, or unique habitats
 - d. High concentration breeding and migrating birds (Warblers, Redstart, Chat, Woodcock, Whip-Poor-Will, Ruffed Grouse)

- e. Living laboratory on Avian species
- 3. High Concentration of Vernal Pools
 - a. A wetland that dries up every year
 - b. Lacks a permanent inlet or outlet
 - c. Relatively small and shallow
 - d. Supports a distinctive biological community of plants and animals
 - e. Does not support fish
 - f. Amphibians have a specific vernal pool that they want to stay in. If you move them, they return to the original pool. If disturbed you risk destroying the habitat and animals.
 - g. Clearwater Conservancy recommends preserving up to 1,000 foot circumference surrounding the vernal pools to protect the amphibians that travel in that area, and is currently working to purchase some of the land proposed for future development to save the habitat for the amphibians.
- 4. Spruce Creek Watershed
 - a. Stream Impairments – realigning the flow so that the streams grow in a healthy direction
 - b. Trying to protect the watershed resource and groundwater
 - c. Ground water is not the same as surface water
 - d. Soil mantle is deep and the forest ground has high infiltration capacity
 - e. No surface streams flow across area
 - f. The water table is the deepest in the watershed
 - g. Ground water from the area flows 13 miles to the northeast (Big Spring, Bellefonte)
 - h. Largest in Pennsylvania
 - i. Most important water reservoir
- b. State College Borough Water Authority (SCBWA) – Source Water Protection (Brian Heiser)
 - i. Well Field 2
 - 1. Protect drinking water sources
 - 2. Helps ensure a high quality and reliable water supply
 - 3. SCBWA's Plan consists of 2 components
 - 4. Characterize the recharge area
 - 5. Identify potential contaminants
 - 6. Identify contributing areas
 - a. Geophysical surveying
 - b. Fracture trace Analysis
 - c. Groundwater flow model
 - 7. Source Water Assessment
 - a. Identifies the pollutants in the contributing area

- b. Ranks them in order of concern
- 8. Utilize the models to assess future land use impacts
- 9. Contingency planning
- 10. New source planning
- 11. Public education
- 12. Cooperation among governing bodies
- 13. Reassess the plan periodically
- 14. Gray's Woods Wellfield
 - a. Located in Halfmoon Township
 - b. Land immediately around wellfield is largely forested
 - c. Land use is agricultural
- 15. Impacts:
 - a. Conditional land uses in mining
 - b. Potential Pollution sources
 - i. Transportation corridors
 - ii. Residential/ light commercial
 - iii. Agricultural activities
 - iv. Onlot waste systems
 - c. Wellfield in 3 zones
 - i. Zone 1 is 400 foot radius
 - ii. Zone 2 is within development area
 - iii. Zone 3 is further out west
 - iv. Zone 1 and 2 are the primary concern for protection
 - v. Zones are determined based off time it takes to have the water run-off into the well water
- c. Water Authority: John Lichman
 - i. Need a way to get water back in ground
 - ii. Stormwater management
 - iii. Geology – there are a lot of cracks and voids in ground and sink holes are a direct line into the water. Need to minimize sinkholes
 - iv. Pesticides: need to be careful
 - v. Infiltration practice
 - vi. Porous pavement and other sub-surface
 - vii. Retention basins
- d. Larry Fennessey
 - i. The ground is mostly sandy in the barrens, which keeps pollutants on top. Once it gets to the clay areas it spreads out through the water source.
 - ii. Because the ground has fractures in it, the wells will have all kinds of problems with pollutants due to high levels of recharge.
 - iii. Septic systems will fail in the projected developmental area.
 - iv. Wells will be contaminated.
 - v. Vernal pools are not good for house development because they will flood the basements due to the micro-soil differences.

- vi. The best places to build house are historically agricultural lands. The forest areas are there because 200 years ago they were wiped clean and tested for agriculture. The forest areas we have now are because those are the areas that failed agriculturally and allowed to grow back to forested areas.

Mr. Nauman suggested that the Planning Commission review the RPD regulations which require an inventory of primary and secondary conservation areas to incorporate into the new zoning district for this area. This would allow for development of the areas outside the environmentally sensitive zones.

Mr. Little asked Ms. Ombalski if there are examples of other municipal ordinances that protect vernal pools. Ms. Ombalski offered to research the issue.

6. Reports

a. BOS Update -

Ms. Liggett stated the Board tabled discussion of the joint meeting with the PC until a future meeting. She will report to the PC when the discussion occurs.

b. Zoning Officer's Report –

Ms. Liggett reported that several new homes are being built in the Trotter Farms neighborhood.

c. CRPC Update-

Mr. Evans stated the next meeting will be a joint session with the Transportation and Land Use Committee.

d. Open Space Board Update –

Mr. Nauman reported that the Centre County Agriculture Coordinator will present information at the Open Space Board's next meeting on April 1, 2015.

7. Matter of Record

- a. The next meeting of the Planning Commission is April 7, 2015 and will include a discussion on the Regional Bike Plan with Trish Meek.
- b. The CRPA is hosting a free webinar on the issue of "takings" at the COG Offices tomorrow (March 18, 2015). Ms. Liggett noted that this session may provide useful information on the PC's recommendation to establish a 10 acre minimum lot size for property in the Agricultural zoning district.

8. Adjournment

Mr. Nauman moved to adjourn. Ms. Del Corso seconded. Vote in favor was: 6-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicole Gross
Recording Secretary