

**HALFMOON TOWNSHIP
Planning Commission Meeting**

April 1, 2014

7:00 pm

Present: Danelle Del Corso, Melissa Gartner, Jeff Martin, Jason Little, John Stevens, Lorin Nauman, Sam Evans
Others present: D. J. Liggett, CRPA; Susan Steele, Township Manager; Nicole Gross, recording secretary

1. Call To Order

Chair Ms. Del Corso called the meeting to order at 6:58 p.m.

2. Citizen Comments

Mr. Evans reported that the Township's Easter Party was a very nice event for residents.

3. Approval of April 1, 2014 Minutes

Motion. Mr. Stevens moved to approve the minutes of April 1, 2014. Mr. Nauman seconded. Vote: 6-0.

4. Reports

a. BOS Update

The issue regarding the regional refuse contract was discussed. At this time, the BOS is recommending no change to the Township's refuse collection system.

b. Zoning Officer's Report

Ms. Liggett reported that she and Mr. Piper met with a citizen who wishes to operate a business from his home in the Agricultural zoning district. He is considering this opportunity because he has to replace his septic system and if he needs a larger capacity septic system for the business he would have it installed now.

c. CRPC Update

Mr. Evans reported that the CHIP program for implementing the Centre Region Comprehensive Plan was presented. It did not meet with resounding approval. The CRPC also received a presentation on future land development on vacant land inside the Regional Growth Boundary. There was discussion about the capacity of the sewage treatment plant and how proposed development could exceed capacity at the UAJA facility.

d. Open Space Board Update

Mr. Nauman reported the Open Space Board is reviewing program guidelines, the application process, finance, budget preparation, the 10% exception for subdividing large areas of land, land rating, and four or five properties that are interested in participating in the open space program that are going through application process.

5. Agricultural Zoning District- Bulk Regulations

Ms. Liggett discussed with Mr. Piper the minimum lot requirement for the Agricultural zoning district. He stated there is no specific minimum; however everything should have a 25 foot minimum setback, except manure storage which should be 150 feet. Max height should be 35 feet for everything, except for barns and silos.

Mr. Piper also mentioned moving the recreational facilities to the Natural Area zoning district. Ms. Liggett suggested maybe splitting up the recreational uses to separate them by category. The current definition is very broad and includes tennis courts, gun clubs, horse paths, race tracks, etc. She suggested that the Planning Commission consider the types of uses it wants in the Agricultural zoning district and what they want elsewhere, specifically the commercial recreational uses, i.e. golf course and vehicular racetrack. Ms. Liggett reported that other municipal definitions often split recreational activities between commercial vs. private uses. Ms. Gartner asked what is the intent of splitting them up, is it based on issues like how much traffic it will bring in or what makes noise/ annoyance. Ms. Del Corso asked Ms. Liggett to do some research to see what the other townships are doing to guide the Planning Commission in its decision. Ms. Steele stated the PC should split the recreational uses up between commercial versus private to make it easier to administer. Mr. Evans stated that all uses in the Agricultural zoning district should be associated with an agricultural use, i.e. horseback riding. Ms. Liggett stated that in some municipalities, agricultural uses are considered industrial, therefore a item like a racetrack is not really applicable in such a district. This issue will be discussed further at a later meeting.

On the discussion of minimum lot size, the PC's recommendation was 10 acres minimum for all Permitted Uses. Ms. Liggett reported that Mr. Piper recommends that the Planning Commission consider increasing the minimum size to 11 acres to accommodate the Township's Open Space Regulations. Ms. Liggett reported that the Clean and Green regulations allow for up to 2 acres to be subdivided from a parent tract and still be considered "clean and green." Looking at the Permitted Uses section, Mr. Evans questioned the 10 acre minimum for bed and breakfast. Ms. Steele stated the bed and breakfast in the Agricultural zoning district is more commercial and an advertised business versus having someone stay over in your house.

Ms. Steele stated that Mr. Piper asked how the 5 acre lots that are currently being farmed and harvested would meet the 10 acre minimum requirements for the Agricultural district. Ms. Del Corso stated that they would still be permitted in the AR (Agriculture Residential) zone which permits anything that has to do with tilling of the land on 3-10 acres. Ms. Steele stated that if someone were to complain then it would become an issue for the Planning Commission but as of right now it will be grandfathered in. Ms. Gartner stated that this is a good way to allow the older farmers, that cannot physically farm their land, to still produce a form of income if they rent the land out to someone that will farm it. Mr. Nauman stated that this also a way of retaining the land as agricultural. Ms. Liggett stated that this is a good way to keep the general intent of the western part of the township as agricultural and rural in nature. Mr. Martin whether these lots would still be grandfathered in if they are really in the Agricultural zone or does this mean they should be re-zoned. Ms. Del Corso asked where the PC would draw the line if the 10 acre minimum lot size is approved and goes into effect. Ms. Liggett stated that the Township does not typically inspect properties to determine if

raising hay is a new use on a five acre lot in the Agricultural zoning district. The Township would only be aware of this and it would only become an issue if someone complained about a neighbor. The consensus of the PC is that anything new performed in these the Agricultural district will fall under the new 10 acre minimum lot size regulations and as issues arise they will be discussed at that time.

Ms. Liggett stated that Mr. Piper brought up the issue of new residential development in the Agricultural district. He suggested using the Septic Suitability Map and create a regulation that states that residential development can only occur on parcels that have at least 50% suitable soils for septic. Ms. Steele stated that if she has 100 acres, under the current lot she can get 10 lots, then adding the Septic Suitability Map that she will only have maybe 5 lots. Mr. Martin summarized that the Planning Commission would make a regulation stating that the minimum lot size is 10 acres plus the Septic Suitability Map. Ms. Del Corso stated that residential development is contradictory to the intent of the Agricultural zone. The purpose is to keep residential developments out of the Agricultural zone. Ms. Liggett noted that previously the Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area were used to deter development in rural areas, but with advances in sewage disposal technology the best tool for accomplishing that goal is zoning. With newer technology, developers may be able to address the septic suitability issues with higher tech systems in the future. Adopting zoning to meet the Township's intent is the best way to regulate the types of uses the Township wants in any zoning district.

Ms. Liggett stated that the PC should consider a definition for "Essential Services." Ms. Liggett suggested changing "Public Service/Public Utility" to "Utility Facility" because all utility uses may not be public. Ms. Liggett stated that the Planning Commission may also want to consider specific conditions for some uses, such as those in wind turbine ordinance. The Planning Commission agreed to use the same definition for "Utility Facility" as College Township. The Planning Commission agreed to use the same definition for "Essential Services" as Ferguson Township.

Utility Facility-

A structure or building maintained by a utility for the operation and maintenance of a utility's service. For the purposes of this chapter, such facilities include buildings or structures such as electric substations, water treatment plants, water tower/tank/reservoir or pumping stations, sewage disposal or pumping plants and other similar structures. Power-generation facilities, resource-extraction activities and communication antennas are not to be included in this definition.

Essential Services-

Facilities for the distribution of utility services, including gas, electric, steam, water, sewerage, telephone and similar services.

Quarry and Extraction will be discussed at a future meeting. Mr. Martin states that when it comes to mining, a 50 acre minimum lot size would deter people. Telecommunications

and Wireless facilities were omitted from the previous list of uses. The PC agreed to discuss the Telecommunications Ordinance at a future meeting.

6. Yield Planning

Ms. Liggett provided a draft copy of the Intent Statement for the Yield Planning section. She asked whether the Planning Commission had any comments or corrections. The PC unanimously agreed that the statement reflects their intent for this section of the Township Code. The summary of the intent is that since there is no public sewage in the Township and people rely on the soils to dispose of sewage and create safe drinking water, the Township needs to be careful with development to protect the soils and water for public safety.

7. C-Net Coverage

Ms. Del Corso stated that this could be a good idea for specific meetings when issues need to be brought to the public's attention. She stated this could be a quarterly option. The Planning Commission stated this should be discussed at a later meeting since the Planning Commission is halfway through the year already.

8. Matter of Record

- The May 6, 2014 meeting is cancelled so the PC can attend a program on the law and subdivision/land development issues at the Ramada Hotel & Conference Center.
- The next PC meeting will be held on May 13, 2014.
- Telecommunications and Recreational uses will be discussed at the next meeting.
- Conditional Uses will be defined.

9. Adjournment

Motion. Mr. Stevens moved to adjourn. Mr. Nauman seconded. Vote: 6-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicole Gross
Recording Secretary