

HALFMOON TOWNSHIP
Planning Commission Meeting
Joint Session with the Parks and Recreation Board
January 24, 2012 7:00 pm

Present: Danelle Del Corso, Bob Eberhart, Larry Fennessey, Jordan Finkelstein, Lorin Nauman
Absent: John Stevens, Joe Tylka
Others present: D. J. Liggett, CRPA; Susan Steele, Township Manager; Melissa Gartner, recording secretary
Park Board members: Jason Fralick, Hyeseon Kim, Todd Kirsten, Yvonne Smith

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 January 10, 2012 Minutes

Motion. Mr. Finkelstein moved to approve the minutes of January 10, 2012. Mr. Eberhart seconded. Vote: 4-0-1 (Nauman abstained).

4. Reports

a. BOS Update

At the last meeting, Ms. Steele gave a PowerPoint presentation on the new municipal building concept. She has formed a rudimentary team that includes Walt Schneider, D.J. Liggett, Dave Piper, Mike Siggins (the Feasibility Consultant) and herself to determine what can be done with the current municipal building and future needs for municipal meeting/office space. This week, the BOS will discuss obtaining a procurement card, salt shed specifications (a maintenance building addition), and the new Operating Reserve Fund within the General Fund. This restricted fund was to be used for emergencies only; now it will be used for the new municipal building. The BOS will also send out an RFP for staff insurances beginning in FY 2013.

b. Zoning Officer's Report

Mr. Piper was not present, but Ms. Steele reported that a 6-bedroom home is planned for one of Mr. Maloney's properties. One question is whether a drip irrigation system can be built large enough to handle a 6-bedroom home. This will be reviewed by the designer of the septic system.

c. CRPC Update

No meeting was held, but Ms. Liggett reported that CRPC will be including monthly regional activity reports with existing electronic mail to PC members.

5. Act 153 Open Space Program – Property Review and Advance Payments

Ms. Del Corso reminded the PC that at the last meeting, the PC recommended approval of 2011-32 and 2011-34. Ms. Steele said that staff e-mailed and phoned Ms. Podgurski, but she has not yet responded. Ms. Liggett recommended waiting until the February 7 PC meeting until making a decision.

Motion. Mr. Finkelstein moved that the PC should table any recommendation on #2011-33 and an advance payment amount until the February 7 meeting to wait for a response from Ms. Podgurski. Mr. Nauman seconded. Vote: 5-0.

6. Public Meeting on Parks and Trails

Ms. Del Corso reviewed the goals for the upcoming public meeting on parks, trails, and facilities. This meeting is planned to solicit comments on the proposed Parks Trails Map showing connections between neighborhoods and parks in the Township.

Ms. Liggett said that Township conducted a resident survey in 2003. In response to the survey, the Park Plan was developed to identify existing facilities, anticipated population growth, and recommendations for new parks and trails. The Plan was ambitious, including expanding the parks and building trails. The PC followed up with property owners in the vicinity of the existing parks and contacted property owners whose property might be crossed if a trail were constructed. None of these property owners were interested in a new trail on their property or in selling their land to the Township at market value for parkland. At that time, the PC met with the Parks & Rec Board and began exploring trail connections that would utilize existing roads away from Route 550. A trail from Sawmill Road to a proposed new Township Park on Houtz Lane and connecting through the Gray Hampton development and Smith Road to Autumn Meadow Park. This approach would use a "Share the Road" strategy, in which signs would be posted to alert motorists that the road is also used by pedestrians and bicyclists. The PC is also recommending a trail connection from the Trotter Farms neighborhood to the Wildlife Corridor and across the adjacent farm field to connect with Houtz Lane. This trail would be identified on the Official Map. The Official Map process notifies future developers that the Township has tentative plans for a trail connection in that area and gives the Township an opportunity to work with the developer on installing the trail. After meeting with the PRB, the PC decided to hold a public meeting to review the information listed above, and also give the PRB a chance to get public feedback on what residents want at their parks. In addition, the public has the chance to help prioritize the wish list, since funds are limited and amenities are expensive.

The BOS also commissioned a feasibility study for the Township building. One suggestion from this was to build a new building, with the existing building either repurposed or demolished. This idea could also be included in the public meeting as part of the discussion on future community facilities, if the PC and PRB think it would be helpful.

Ms. Liggett reviewed the PowerPoint slides:

- Purpose of the meeting - input from residents
- Results of the past public opinion surveys

- Adopted Parks Plan and recommendations
- Existing Parks facilities
- PRB opportunity to discuss activities each park
- Maps showing existing and proposed park locations and illustrating how the main park is on the opposite side of Route 550 from most residents
- Cyclist usage and types of cyclists, signage, etc.
- Next steps and opportunities for public input
- PC and PRB member lists

PC and PRB members then reviewed the large Township maps. They discussed fair market value vs. top dollar purchases of land, missing trail links, crossing Route 550 from the neighborhoods to Municipal Park, the tot lot in the Trotter Farms neighborhood, and the potential sites for a new Township building. Ms. Steele added that if a new Township building is set for Autumn Meadow Park, the land would need to be rezoned before a building could be built. Members then discussed the mixed signals from the surveys: residents are strongly in favor of expanded park facilities, such as a pool, but are not enthusiastic about paying for them.

Ms. Liggett reviewed Ms. Steele's information on neighboring municipalities' park facilities and the taxes they have levied to pay for these amenities. This should help residents get a realistic sense of the opportunity costs associated with park expansion.

Discussion then moved to the meeting format. The consensus was to have an Open House thirty minutes before the meeting start time, to allow the public to study maps and some of the background information that will be posted ahead of time. Previously the PC had brainstormed alternate meeting locations for this event. Ms. Liggett said the Halfmoon Christian Fellowship Church was willing to host the meeting, but Mondays would be the only available night until after Easter. Ms. Del Corso checked with Jason Coopey of Way Fruit Farm, and he said their facility would be available. The Way Fruit Farm store closes at 7 p.m., so their calendar is open for evening events.

Ms. Steele suggested that the PC and PRB should be prepared to field questions about the new Township building since it could be located near Autumn Meadow Park. PC and PRB members thought this was a wise course of action. Mr. Nauman asked if the Township was allowed to charge for usage of Township meeting/athletic space. Ms. Steele said many communities do charge for facility rental. However, for example, if a gym is built, there would be added O&M costs for locker rooms and other public amenities. Currently, the municipal building rental rate is \$20.

Mr. Eberhart suggested having a written survey for people to offer comments at the meeting, in case they are not comfortable speaking out. Mr. Fennessey then suggested handing out blank 3x5 cards as a chance for people to write down any other ideas they had. Mr. Fennessey also discussed adding a small street sign with a possible graphic at each major entry point into the Township to let motorists know that this is a "Share the Road Community." Members thought this was a helpful idea.

Mr. Kirsten then reminded the group about selecting a date. Scouting is on Mondays, the BOS meets on the second and fourth Thursdays, PC meets on the first and third Tuesday, and Penn State's Spring Break is March 3-10. Ms. Del

Corso suggested an alternate Thursday, and members decided on March 15. The Open House would begin at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting would begin at 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Liggett mentioned advertising and showed the flier she prepared. Ms. Del Corso offered to print 500 color fliers and leave them at the Township office for pick-up. Mr. Fennessey said it would be good to contact the den leaders of Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts to have them distribute fliers. Ms. Smith suggested contacting the Garden Club, the Grange, the Preschool, and the veterinary office. Ms. Del Corso then called for volunteers to distribute fliers. The tasks are as follows:

Boy Scouts: Hyeseon Kim

Brother's Pizza, Garden Club: D.J. Liggett

Bulldogs football: Todd Kirsten

Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, Jodon's Pony Club: Larry Fennessey

Grange, Country Christian Preschool, Halfmoon Christian Fellowship: Melissa Gartner

Little League: Yvonne Smith

Way Fruit Farm, Halfmoon Valley Animal Hospital: Danelle Del Corso

Newspaper boxes: Danelle Del Corso (Centennial), Bob Eberhart (Houtz Lane, Shanelly Road, Ira Lane), Jordan Finkelstein (Smith Road), Hyeseon Kim (Trotter Farm), Yvonne Smith (Sawmill Road)

7. Matter of Record

- The next PC meeting will be held on February 7.

8. Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Gartner
Recording Secretary