

HALFMOON TOWNSHIP
Planning Commission Meeting
February 7, 2012 7:00 pm

Present: Danelle Del Corso, Bob Eberhart, Larry Fennessey, Jordan Finkelstein, Lorin Nauman, John Stevens
Absent: Joe Tylka
Others present: D. J. Liggett, CRPA; Amy Smith, Township Clerk; Kathleen Yurchak, Township Solicitor; Melissa Gartner, recording secretary

1. Call To Order

Chair Ms. Del Corso called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. Citizen Comments

None

3. Approval of January 24, 2012 Minutes

Motion. Mr. Nauman moved to approve the minutes of January 24, 2012. Mr. Stevens seconded. Vote: 6-0.

4. Reports

a. BOS Update

Ms. Steele was not present. Ms. Liggett said that at the next BOS meeting, they will hold the Public Hearing to discuss the Open Space properties applying for inclusion and take action.

b. Zoning Officer's Report

Mr. Piper was not present.

c. CRPC Update

Ms. Del Corso was voted as Vice Chair of the CRPC, with Mr. Steve Watson (Penn State representative) as Chair. The Comprehensive Plan is still targeted for completion by June, which might be an optimistic goal. Ms. Liggett said that Mr. Tom Zilla presented information on the MPO and transportation planning, reporting that there are many projects but no money. Ms. Del Corso said he also provided information on the future of smaller MPOs and the possibility of their elimination.

Mr. Fennessey asked about an existing liaison position for Halfmoon Township on the State College Borough Water Authority. Ms. Liggett offered to follow up and see if this position was still available.

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

Ms. Smith and Ms. Liggett said that Ms. Podgurski has not yet responded to the electronic and written inquiries regarding a portion of her property being located in the Village Zoning District.

Mr. Fennessey discussed the sewer issues within the Village District and the topography of that parcel of land. There are 135 acres within the Village Zoning District; the front third of this property would affect 12 acres or nearly 10%. Mr. Eberhart asked the PC if anyone thought those 12 acres should be 'protected' for the Village District. Mr. Stevens and Mr. Nauman asked if the Township lost these acres, would it fail to meet any state requirements for light industrial space? Ms. Liggett said since there is still vacant land available within the Village District, there should not be a challenge.

Motion. Mr. Nauman recommended the BOS include Application #2011-33 in the Act 153 Open Space Program. Mr. Stevens seconded. Vote: 6-0

Members then discussed the 10-year advance payment. Mr. Fennessey asked Ms. Yurchak if the Township had the power to cancel any leases if the economy turned drastically worse. His example was similar to the Great Depression with at least 50% unemployment. Ms. Yurchak said she would think about how to structure that language. Currently there is a provision to cancel if a property is no longer meeting the needs of the Township, but not for a financial reason. After reviewing the OSP charter, Ms. Yurchak found a provision stating a lease can be terminated with mutual consent if it is no longer desirable or suitable, and a provision stating if the landowner is facing financial hardship, he/she can request lease termination. Ms. Liggett thought a recommendation to change the language of the OSP charter would first go to the BOS, and then they would send it to the OSB to review. Mr. Fennessey said if this language does not currently exist, it should be added. Ms. Liggett will take this to the BOS for comment.

Motion. Mr. Nauman recommended the BOS approve the advance payment of \$12,666.70 to Applicant #2011-33. Mr. Eberhart seconded. Vote: 5-1 (Fennessey)

6. 2012 Work Program

Ms. Del Corso summarized the 2011 work program:

- Parks Plan Implementation
- Open Space Review Board recommendations
- Review Codification – RPD design for R-1 properties
- Evaluation of Village Zoning District
- Evaluation of Agriculture Zoning District
- Private Roads – Signage, Add to Official Map
- COG Energy Efficiency Policy

Ms. Del Corso then reviewed that the PC had worked on the first three items, and continued to plan for and develop new bike and pedestrian pathways (COG Energy Efficiency idea). Ms. Liggett added that the PC had discussed the Ag Zoning District, and she presented it to the BOS, but the BOS was not interested in pursuing that issue.

Ms. Del Corso presented a tentative list of ideas for the 2012 work program, and members discussed these ideas for a short time. Mr. Fennessey suggested tackling the private roads and shared driveway issues since this frequently comes up. Ms.

Liggett suggested that the Planning Commission consider adding a provision in the Agricultural Zoning District to require soils testing for residential developments using the Rural Preservation Development design standards. She noted that if such a requirement were in place, the number of new housing units on a property would be limited by the ability of the soils to treat wastewater from the new homes. She reported that Patton Township's Rural Preservation Development standards include a Yield Plan requirement so that developers can never place more houses on a property than the soil can handle.

Ms. Del Corso then began a discussion to prioritize the list, and members added comments to finalize this ranking:

1. Parks Plan Implementation
2. Evaluation of Agriculture/Residential Zoning District – Yield Plan
3. Private Roads/Shared Driveways
4. Ridge Overlay District
5. Evaluation of Village Zoning District

Also, the PC will work on reviewing the Codification of the Rural Preservation Development after the OSP review is completed.

Mr. Nauman asked about the status of Mr. Maloney's microfiltration system review request because it was outside the Sewer Service Area. Ms. Liggett said the request to amend the Implementation Agreement to allow other technologies is still under review. The information presented thus far is that the technology is available and can be used, but municipalities need to decide if this is the direction they want to proceed. The Region must decide if it wants to maintain the rural character outside the RGB and more intense development inside the RGB. Now, the CRPA is working on a Buildable Capacity assessment for the RGB and they will hold a workshop on this topic in June 2012. Mr. Nauman added that this would impact Halfmoon's Village District Zoning and any future higher-density clusters in the Township. Limiting development to on-lot systems will restrict developments in the near future. Ms. Liggett suggested asking Mr. Cory Miller from UAJA to speak to the PC on this issue. For instance, it may make more sense for the Grays Woods pumping station to handle wastewater from the RVZD because it was located close enough to an existing system. Ms. Liggett also suggested waiting until after the June workshop and then addressing this topic.

7. Annual Report

Ms. Del Corso prepared a bulleted draft for the members to discuss and edit. It listed a summary of activities from the fourteen 2011 PC meetings. It also included a paragraph on the Parks Plan work, the OSP recommendations, and a review of the Codification definitions. The PC sent the Ag Zoning District to the BOS but they were not interested at this time. The PC also addressed the COG Energy Efficiency request by continuing to plan for and require bike and pedestrian facilities and new developments. Members suggested submitting the report as is with a note directing readers to the minutes posted on the Township website.

8. Ridge Overlay District

Ms. Liggett brought materials to discuss, including a map showing poor colluvial soils in the Township. The only colluvial soils are located north of Route 550, which is the area that PC members had previously discussed.

Mr. Fennessey noted that colluvial soils form under gravity, sliding down along a mountainside. In that process, a dense layer of clay formed, with a fragipan layer 18" deep that prevents deeper water absorption. These are poor soils for agriculture (crops cannot be sustained) and previous farmers allowed the lands to return to woods. Colluvial soils do not occur on the ridge tops because that is the parent material; the colluvial soils are materials that have been transported down the slope.

Ms. Del Corso suggested that this item be discussed later in the year, based on the priority order for the new 2012 work program.

9. Matters of Record

- The next PC meeting will be held on February 21. Ms. Del Corso will not be able to attend, so Mr. Tylka will be asked to chair this meeting.
- The Centre Region is holding a Zoning Course on three Monday evenings from February 27-March 12. The course will be held at the College Township Building.
- Flyers for the March 15, 2012 Town Meeting on Parks & Community Facilities have been distributed to the PC and PRB. Members should distribute their door-to-door flyers on March 1 to give residents two weeks' notice.
- A copy of the January Activity Report for the Centre Regional Planning Agency is posted to the PC web page. Members of the Planning Commission agreed that this information is not necessary, given that there are CRPC reports given at the regular meetings.
- The American Planning Association recently published a factsheet describing farmland protection tools. A copy of the factsheet has been posted to the PC web page.

10. Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Gartner
Recording Secretary