

HALFMOON TOWNSHIP
Planning Commission Meeting
March 15, 2011 7:00 pm

Present: Danelle Del Corso, Bob Eberhart, Larry Fennessey, Jordan Finkelstein, Lorin Nauman, John Stevens, Joe Tylka
Absent: none
Others present: D. J. Liggett, CRPA; James May, CRPA; Susan Steele, Township Manager; Dave Piper, Zoning Officer; Eric Casanave, PennTerra Engineering; Mark Maloney, Halfmoon Land Co.; Melissa Gartner, recording secretary;

1. Call To Order

Chair Ms. Del Corso called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. Citizen Comments

None

3. Approval of March 1, 2011 Minutes

Motion. Mr. Stevens moved to approve the minutes of March 1, 2011. Mr. Nauman seconded. Vote: 7-0.

4. Reports

a. BOS Update

Ms. Steele reported that last week, the BOS saw a presentation by an architect on a possible feasibility study for a new municipal bldg. The BOS also approved advertising for bids for the ice rink/tennis court. The advertising would begin in April with construction scheduled for July.

b. Zoning Officer's Report

In 2011, Mr. Piper issued one permit for a deck.

c. CRPC Update

Ms. Liggett said that an orientation was held for the new CRPC members from Halfmoon, Patton, and Ferguson Townships. Members discussed the Patton Twp Park near the airport, and the Comprehensive Plan. The CRPC staff reviewed the key findings on the Comprehensive Plan; they then asked the Regional Planning Commission to provide comments on the findings.

5. Sketch Plan – Halfmoon Land Company

Mr. Eric Casanave, PennTerra Engineering, and Mr. Mark Maloney, Halfmoon Land Company, presented a revised sketch plan for changes to the development planned for the north side of Route 550 between the former Simpson stone home and the cemetery. This plan was a combination of the original sketch plan (part of the plot plan from the planning module shown in November 2010) and a geographical overlay from the Centre Region.

Mr. Casanave showed on the map that two internal roads had been eliminated, some lots had been redrawn, and the number of lots was reduced from 38 to 10 over 44 acres, and 33 lots over 164 acres. This would put four larger "estate" lots (6-10 acres each) around the existing pond, and four 10-20 acre lots going up the mountain side. Mr. Casanave and Mr. Maloney felt that this was a drastic change in visible density from the plan shown in November 2010.

Mr. Tylka asked about the mountain lots and their access to Route 550. Mr. Casanave explained that their driveways would connect to the gravel road driveway used by the small stone house (marked by stone pillars on Route 550). Discussion continued that this would be a "shared driveway" maintained by the residents. Ms. Steele said that she and Mr. Piper discussed the "shared driveway" concept. Under the RPD, four lots could be on a shared driveway. The Halfmoon ordinances did not define a shared driveway, but the ordinances did read that anything not covered fell under the PA statutes. Pennsylvania statutes allowed for two lots to use a shared driveway. Mr. Casanave said that this would fall under the RPD.

Ms. Steele asked if the larger mountain lots would be serviced by the MBR plant, or would they have onsite sewage? Mr. Maloney said that had not been determined yet, but they were also considering the options of onsite sewage for individual lots or a smaller separate system for the four mountain lots group.

Mr. Maloney then showed the PC a color map of Greenmoore Village surrounding the gardens on three sides (the fourth side is Route 550). This is a changing focus for his development, embracing the Greenmoore Gardens land and concept of local food.

Mr. Casanave said that under current Ag zoning, this sketch plan would still accommodate the Rural Preservation District requirement of 50% open space within the development. It would use country lots (2 acre minimum size) rather than smaller neighborhood lots. Discussion continued about the RPD, options 1 and 2, and lots existing prior to 1999. Mr. Casanave said that this parcel did exist prior to 1999 and the "estate lots" would surpass the 2 acre minimum size.

Mr. Eberhart asked if the open space that went with the neighborhood lots would be interspersed with the open space with the country lots. Mr. Casanave and Mr. Maloney explained that the open space preserved from the neighborhood lot density would be located north of the village proper and near the mountain lots. Mr. Maloney said that there would be 76 houses in Halfmoon Township on the north side of Route 550. The entire development still had a maximum full-build of 420 houses, even with the proposed decrease.

Discussion continued about the shared driveway leading from the stone pillar driveway off Route 550 up to the existing stone cabin. This would serve as access to the four mountain lots. Since the Halfmoon Township ordinance limited a shared driveway in a RPD to four lots, this would require a waiver from the Planning Commission: the existing stone cabin already used the driveway and four new lots were proposed to use the driveway.

Mr. May asked about the phases of Mr. Maloney's full plan. Mr. Maloney explained that the new "estate lots" or country lots would be Phase I, the second land submission would be the neighborhood lots around the cemetery, and the third submission would be the large development on the south side of Route 550. The first four lots would not be included in the sewage planning module. Mr. Nauman asked if the country lots would be restricted against further subdivision, and Mr. Casanave said they laid out the lots so that further subdivision would be difficult.

Ms. Liggett asked about water supply for the first four lots. Mr. Casanave said that they would have private wells.

6. Joint Meeting – Planning Commission and Parks Board

The PC agreed to meet on May 10 as a joint session with the Parks Board to review the goals and objectives of the Halfmoon Park Plan.

Motion. Mr. Finkelstein moved to reschedule the May PC meeting dates from May 3 and 17 to May 10 and May 24. Mr. Nauman seconded. Vote: 7-0.

7. Work Program

Mr. Eberhart wanted to discuss Item #3 – reviewing codification, including the RPD requirements. His interpretation of the RPD was that new residential developments had to comply with all existing subdivision and zoning requirements, which included open space. Ms. Steele said that Ms. Kathleen Yurchak was reviewing the codification. Ms. Del Corso suggested waiting until codification and then review how RPD was included in the codification. Mr. Eberhart would like Ms. Yurchak to review the RPD ordinance, and report back at the next PC meeting.

Mr. Tylka asked about Item #2 – the Open Space Review Board. The final meeting of the Five Year Review group was set for March 21. Ms. Steele said the BOS would like to have a joint meeting with the Open Space Board in June. After more discussion, Ms. Del Corso said for clarification that the joint presentation would not happen until June or later.

Mr. Tylka asked for clarification on Item #5. Mr. Fennessey explained that this item focused on revising the zoning to make better use of limited resources. It would also discourage payments for development rights on land that would never be developed anyway. Ms. Del Corso asked to reword Item #5, and Mr. Fennessey stated, “simplify the ordinances to restrict the development at no cost to the municipality.” Ms. Liggett added that Ferguson had a rural Agricultural Zone allowing 1 unit per 50 acres. Her interpretation of #5 was, it asked what Halfmoon would want to consider as the minimum large lot size. Mr. Tylka asked how the Ferguson ordinance became law, and others explained that there would have been public hearings and an ordinance change.

Ms. Del Corso recommended raising Item #3, and Ms. Liggett suggested #2 to keep #1 as is, satisfying the BOS’s priority for the Park Plan.

Motion. Mr. Nauman moved to approve the 2011 Work Program, switching Items #2 and #3, and refer it to the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Finkelstein seconded. Vote: 7-0.

8. Agenda for April 5

Bill Hilshey, Clearwater Conservancy, and Jeff Sturniolo, Glenn O. Hawbaker Inc., were scheduled to attend for a follow-up presentation.

9. Adjournment

Motion. Mr. Nauman moved to adjourn. Mr. Stevens seconded. Vote: 7-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Gartner
Recording Secretary