

HALFMOON TOWNSHIP
Planning Commission Meeting
May 5, 2015

Present: Jason Little, Chair; Lorin Nauman, Sam Evans, John Stevens

Others present: D. J. Liggett, CRPA; Nicole Gross, Recording Secretary; Trish Meek, Centre Region Transportation Planner

Not Present: Danelle Del Corso, Melissa Gartner, Jeff Martin

1. Call To Order

Chairman Little called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

2. Citizen Comments

None

3. Approval of April 21, 2015 Minutes

Mr. Stevens moved to approve the April 21, 2015 minutes. Mr. Nauman seconded. Vote in favor was 4-0.

4. Reports

a. *BOS Update* –

The BOS cancelled their last meeting.

b. *Zoning Officer's Report* –

No report.

c. *CRPC Update*-

Mr. Evans stated the next meeting will be May 7, 2015.

d. *Open Space Board Update* –

Mr. Nauman stated there has been no meeting since the last PC meeting.

5. Centre Region Bike Plan, presented by Trish Meek

Trish stated the main focus of the Centre Region Bike Plan is route connectivity, recognizing that bicycles are a form of transportation--not just recreation, and "best practices" (what can Halfmoon Township do to be more bike friendly). There are currently no marked and defined trails/ paths in Halfmoon Township. Trish stated that engineering, education, and enforcement are items to think about with new or existing bike routes. The engineering of the bike paths effects whether they are used or not. Education is important to keep bicyclists safe and enforcing the safety laws and regulations is extremely important. Trish stated that five municipalities have come together to identify and define rules for sharing bike paths among bicyclists, walkers, and runners, developing regulations that are consistent municipality to municipality to maintain a consistent approach.

In order to reduce distractions on the roadway, the municipalities are standardizing signs for the bike paths in higher bike traffic areas. Trish stated the

first public meeting at the COG was on April 15, 2015. Trish stated it was a good turn out and they used the meeting to educate the public on what the communities are trying to do to become more bike friendly.

They created a public input tool, accessible from listservs, municipal websites, newsletters, community events, media interviews, on-target flyer in the local paper, C-Net, and the Parks & Recreation Agency's Active Guide and have had a large response rate (512). Trish stated that the 18-28 year old population is being under represented in the surveys. She stated she is looking for all types of people to fill out surveys (bikers and non-bikers). The Centre Region will be re-evaluated in December 2015 to get from the Bronze level to the Silver level recognition from the League of American Bicyclists.

Next steps:

- June – existing conditions sections Evaluating what the region has and identifying what needs to be added and fixed. Looking to improve the bike paths to better serve bicyclists.
- July – Survey results (identification of facility recommendations). Looking at what the public answered on the survey regarding bicycle paths in the region. The survey has shown that around 130 people surveyed bicycle in the winter, so they are asking for snow removal for those bike paths.
- August – Preliminary recommendations and draft plan.
- September – Submission to municipalities for approval to adopt the new plan.

Accommodating Four types of Riders:

- Strong and fearless – will go anywhere and will fight traffic if they have to.
- Enthused and confident – need bike paths and may drive in traffic
- Interested but concerned- concerned about car traffic near bike paths (normally kids)
- No way, no how – will not ride on the roads or near traffic

The model that People for Bikes (Green Lane Project) follow is called "Build it for Isabella." So the plan is to make paths that a 12 year old child can travel independent of her parents.

Existing bicycle facilities

- Shared use path 31 miles (mostly in Ferguson township)
- Bike lane 12 miles (a normal bike lane with shoulders and grading typically takes up about 20 feet in width)
- Bike route 7 miles
- Statewide Bicycle PA route 16 miles (in the Centre Region)
- Currently no existing bike paths in Halfmoon Township

The Official Map proposes bike paths through Halfmoon Township, some shared use, some bike lanes, and some bike routes.

Mr. Little asked about the discussions around the 2013 proposed Official Map and proposed bike facilities. Ms. Liggett stated that a Town Hall meeting of Halfmoon Township residents indicated a high desire for bicycle lanes but there was concern about safety on State Route 550. She stated that many existing developments in the Township did not incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities as part of the planning. There is currently a proposal to improve Smith Road to provide shoulders and a wider berm which would provide an opportunity for bike accessibility and bicycle lanes. Mr. Little asked whether the State Game Lands #176 at Scotia has paths that are accessible to bikes. Trish replied that she is looking into the State Game Commission's policy on this. Mr. Little felt that would be a good way to connect Circleville Road and Halfmoon Township to make a path from Halfmoon Township all the way to Penn State University lands. Mr. Little thought there may be designated areas for bikes but he doesn't think there are connectable paths to the other townships. Trish stated that a lot of people and businesses are looking at the lifestyle they want to live and are looking for bicycle friendly communities. Mr. Stevens asked which age group is most represented in the survey. Trish stated that the majority are between the ages of 35 and 50.

6. Future Land Use – Overall Density for the Mixed Use Area

The Planning Commission reviewed the new wetland buffer map and the new steep slopes map, noting that less than 10% of the mixed use land area is affected by wetlands or steep slopes. Approximately 40 acres of the Gray's Woods Partnership property are affected by environmental areas that need to be protected and none of the Halfmoon Land Company property is affected by slopes or wetlands. Previously the Planning Commission was thinking that there would be more area affected by the wetlands and steep slopes. Ms. Liggett, in response to a question about the Toll Brothers Project, said the well-fields in that vicinity are only 15 feet down so they are greatly affected by pollutants or storm water runoff. She was not sure whether public concerns about the Toll Brothers Project are driven by the recharge area for the wells or a response to another student housing development.

Mr. Stevens asked if it is out of the question for a portion of the Planned Community zoning district to require a certain percentage of affordable housing. Ms. Liggett stated that there are municipal ordinances locally that include these types of requirements. Mr. Little agreed that a certain percentage should be affordable housing. The PC is in agreement that there is a need for a housing ladder beginning with starter homes and maybe adding more mid-level homes for those moving up with families. Mr. Stevens stated the water recharge areas are an important part of the Planned Community. Mr. Little agreed, he doesn't want to find out later down the road that something will be wrong with the water. The PC is in agreement that there are legitimate concerns for developing over the water recharge area which is located predominately on the Gray's Woods Partnership property. There is obviously development that had already been done on the Zone 2 water recharge area but the PC does not want to increase the possibility of contaminating the water. Mr. Little stated that the PC can recommend ordinances to protect the water recharge area but he still feels uncomfortable with building in the area. Ms. Liggett noted that doing

nothing with the zoning would result in large lot development with septic systems, which is also a concern in a recharge area. She asked whether the shift in the PC's thinking about the Planned Community zoning district is a result of hearing from ClearWater and the State College Borough Water Authority about the environmental concerns. Mr. Stevens stated that his other concern is that he moved out here to get away from high density population. Mr. Evans stated that his thinking has changed somewhat based on the environmental concerns and how they affect everyone around the area. Mr. Little stated he has concerns about the extension of public sewer. He feels there was not enough guidance provided on what should and shouldn't be done to protect certain animals and species.

7. Uses Permitted in the Open Land

What can be considered open space? Mr. Little reviewed the Patton Township regulations for open space in their Planned Community zoning district. Maximum use can be golf course - 35%; parkland - 25%; and storm water management - 20%. Mr. Little discussed possibly placing regulations on the open land area to ensure that it isn't overused with certain things like storm water management. Bike paths can be used for open space. Patton states that there is a minimum of 30% of the gross land area designated as parkland or common open space. A minimum of 20% of the open space must remain as natural areas.

8. Matter of Record

- a. The next meeting of the Planning Commission is May 12, 2015. Discussion will include concerns about water recharge areas and future development. The PC will create a package of information to present to the BOS. Rob Brooks and Don Franson will attend to speak about wetland areas and storm water runoff in well recharge areas.

9. Adjournment

Mr. Stevens moved to adjourn. Mr. Evans seconded. Vote in favor was 4-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicole Gross
Recording Secretary