

HALFMOON TOWNSHIP
Planning Commission Meeting
Joint Session with the Parks and Recreation Board
May 10, 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; Susan Steele, Township Manager; Dave Piper, Zoning Officer; Eric Casanave, Penn Terra Engineering, Inc.; Mark Maloney, Halfmoon Land Company; Trish Meek, CRPA; Melissa Gartner, recording secretary
Park Board members: Hyeseon Kim, Todd Kirsten, Jean Miranda

[Reminder: The next PC meeting date is May 24.]

1. Call To Order

Chair Ms. Del Corso called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. Citizen Comments

None

3. Approval of April 19, 2011 Minutes

Motion. Mr. Nauman moved to approve the minutes of April 19, 2011. Mr. Fennessey seconded. Vote: 7-0.

4. Reports

a. BOS Update

Ms. Steele was at the Parks Board meeting during this report. Mr. Finkelstein said that he attended the most recent BOS meeting. He expressed interest in setting up an Emergency Preparedness Program for the Township residents.

b. Zoning Officer's Update

Mr. Piper said that he issued one permit for a 12'x16' shed.

c. CRPC Update

The meeting was cancelled, so there was no report.

5. Halfmoon Land Company – Preliminary/Final Plan

Comments on the sewer planning module:

Mr. Piper said Mr. Maloney proposed drip and micromound systems, not the typical sand mound systems. These were permissible under DEP regulations, and he felt they would meet the necessary isolation distances. His main concern was about the septic system at the existing small log house next to the barn. He wanted verification that the house had its own system and it was viable.

Ms. Liggett reviewed the planning module also, and her recommendation was that the module needed more work. The property owner still needed to sign and Mr. Piper

needed to verify the septic at the log house. She also recommended adding language to page 2 of the planning module narrative as it affected issues with marginal soil to indicate that the proposed systems would be included in the township sewage management program which requires regular septic tank pumping.

Mr. Tylka asked why they chose these types of systems, and Mr. Maloney said it was more expensive but nearly invisible (no visible mound) more environmentally friendly, and more conducive to working on a slope.

Comments on the Estate Lot development plan for parcels 17-2-4 and 17-2-4A:

Ms. Liggett reviewed from the last meeting:

- The Township still needed a copy of the Highway Occupancy permit.
- This plan still needed approval of the Component 1 Sewage Planning Module by the Township and DEP.
- The plan did not indicate how lots would access the shared driveway.
- The proposed location of the well for Lot #4 was over 310 feet away and across a wetland area from the dwelling location.
- Ms. Liggett voiced concern over the narrowness of the shared driveway, in regard to fire protection and general access.
 - Mr. Casanave said they will widen the road to 12' with an additional 3' on each side (total of 18'), and this will be added to the plan.
- Note #14 needed to specify the parcel numbers of the parent tracts and include the number of acres remaining in each parent tract as the basis for the 50% open space requirement.
- The plan did not indicate the location of the dry hydrant next to the existing pond.
 - Mr. Maloney interjected that he had met with Mr. Sam Connor earlier today and they decided on this dry hydrant location. Mr. Casanave said that Mr. Connor was available by phone to confirm these details, since he did not have written comments.

Mr. Franson's written comments were also shared:

- He did not locate information on the width, cross slope, and material for the proposed extension to the existing driveway.
- Mr. Franson also gave his concerns regarding the shared driveway and issues that needed to be addressed in connection with any waiver
- In his opinion, he did not recommend approval at this time.

Mr. Piper met with Mr. Casanave and Mr. Maloney.

- He felt the plan did meet the requirement for an RPD.
- He shared his concern about the septic at the log cabin.

Ms. Liggett said that there were too many outstanding comments that needed to be addressed, and she recommended that the PC wait to approve this plan.

Mr. Casanave said there was feasible access to all lots, even though it was difficult to see on the complicated plan. He also said that the fire company was not 'daunted' by the driveway and its access. The fire chief was not concerned about running hose length since trucks carry 1200 feet of hose, and the dwellings would only be a maximum of 1000 feet away. The driveway grade of 12% was fine since the driveway ordinance allowed up to 14%. Mr. Casanave spoke to Mr. Franson today and said Mr. Franson's main concern was only on the waiver issue. Mr. Casanave planned to add a cross-section diagram of the road grading, which would satisfy Mr. Franson's

stormwater concerns. The material of the existing driveway was gravel, but it did not show up on the plan. Mr. Casanave planned to add this information.

Ms. Del Corso said that Mr. Casanave and Mr. Maloney needed to explain why they planned for five lots instead of four lots, even though they were aware of the shared driveway issue. Neither Mr. Casanave nor Mr. Maloney specifically responded to this question.

Ms. Steele suggested the PC decide if they wanted to approve the plan conditionally. If the PC did not take that step, then the PC should wait to discuss any waivers. Ms. Steele stated that she, Mr. Piper, Ms. Liggett, Ms. Amy Smith, and the Township Solicitor met to discuss how the Solicitor wanted to handle waivers of the subdivision regulations in the future. Ms. Steele stated the Township Solicitor wanted an application to be filled out by the Applicant responding to the questions raised in the ordinance. Then the application would be sent to the Township Solicitor and Engineer for review and comment. Ms. Steele stated the Township Solicitor stated the MPC states that the governing body, the Board of Supervisors, can approve a waiver. Therefore, the Township Solicitor did not want it to ~~first~~ go to the PC first but rather go directly to the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors could then send to the PC for comment, if they so chose. Ms. Steele stated she had forwarded the application to Eric Mr. Casanave and Mr. Maloney sometime ago previously and they had not submitted the application. Therefore, the waiver is not of issue at this time. Mr. Fennessey was concerned about the pond, since it did not belong to anyone. He thought it should be within an easement, and the plan should indicate that the pond is a right. Mr. Casanave agreed and planned to make this addition.

Mr. Tylka questioned why there was a four-house limit in the Township ordinance. Ms. Steele said that under the RPD, there was a four-house limit on a shared driveway; interestingly, the PA Courts have upheld other ordinances that only allow two homes per shared driveway. Mr. Piper said that clustering homes around a shared driveway would help with higher density and encourage more open space.

Mr. Casanave requested conditional approval, and Ms. Del Corso asked for a motion. Mr. Stevens said that he did not like the precedent of conditional approval, and members agreed. No one proposed a motion for conditional approval. Motion. Mr. Eberhart moved to table this until the next PC meeting on May 24. Mr. Stevens seconded. Vote: 7-0.

Mr. Fennessey reminded Mr. Casanave and Mr. Maloney that the PC had previously dealt with many issues related to private roads. Ms. Steele said that as of 1993, the Township did not approve any additional private roads.

6. Parks Plan – Joint Session with the Parks and Recreation Board (PRB)

Members of the PC and the PRB introduced themselves. Ms. Liggett then presented a short PowerPoint to explain the creation of the Park Plan. Highlights were as follows:

- Results from surveys done in 2003 and 2006 showed these priorities: picnic facilities/pool, trails, off-road connections, playgrounds. The same priorities were also offered at the Comprehensive Planning Meeting last fall in 2010.
- Existing facilities are: Halfmoon Park (12.6 acres) with playing fields, playground, a picnic pavilion, a concession area; Autumn Meadow Park (9.44 acres) with playing fields, a picnic pavilion, a concession area, a swing set; Clearwater Conservancy wildlife corridor (38 acres) for passive recreation

- Future needs: from 2010-2040, the Township population projection is estimated to be over 4300 residents.
- According to the 2010 Census, Halfmoon Township has 191 people under the age of 5 and 623 people between the ages 5 and 17. This is our target population for park usage.
- A rule of thumb for parkland is 5-10 acres of parkland per 1,000 people.
- Halfmoon is about 4 acres below that figure with the current population. Halfmoon would need a total of 43 acres to accommodate the 2040 population forecast.
- Recommended park expansions/new builds: expand Halfmoon Park and Autumn Meadow Park; build Marengo/Centennial Hills Park, Gummo Tract, Barr Farm community park (behind Brothers Pizza), Weaver Farm Ball fields (west side of Orchard Creek), Loveville Park
- Next steps: revise the Future parks map (remove Gummo tract and Autumn Meadow park expansion); add future park locations and trail connections to the Official Map
- Other next steps: fitness trail at Halfmoon Park, maximize use at Autumn Meadow Park, identify Township streets for bike/walking trails and add "Share the Road" signage

Ms. Trish Meek provided more information on cycling needs and options, and explained the term ABC riders (Advanced, Basic, Children):

- Advanced riders like to act like a car and don't worry about riding with traffic.
- Basic riders like to use bikes as transportation but want separation from traffic.
- Children should not be riding in traffic until they reach a certain age/size/skill level.

She also explained the ADA requirements for a fitness trail: it must have a stabilized surface; it must be 36" in width; it must have a vertical clearance of 80"; if the trail is less than 60" wide, it must have passing room every 100'. These requirements would need to be met to be eligible for federal grant funding

Ms. Del Corso suggested discussing the next steps, rather than focusing on details.

Mr. Kirsten was glad to see the "share the road" option as a beginning step. Mr. Tylka asked about available grant funding. Ms. Meek said she worked with four types:

- Federal: Transportation Enhancements and Recreation Trail Funding; costs were split 80% federal and 20% local
- State: Funding through the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) – Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2) funds; costs were split 50% state and 50% local (value of property can be part of local match)
- Local: taxpayer-generated
- Transportation Enhancement Funds: local entity provided pre-construction needs (property acquisition, design, utilities), federal dollars covered 100% of the rest of the cost.

Ms. Kim asked about the trail system in Trotter Farm. Ms. Steele said that the homeowner association maintained the trail but it could be used by the general public as agreed by the developer.

According to Ms. Steele, the BOS wanted the Park Plan to be implemented, but this was a chance for the PC and the PRB to decide that times have changed and perhaps some other options should be pursued. If the PC and Park Board decided a different plan

should be implemented, then Ms. Steele said their recommendations should be taken to the Board of Supervisors to revise the adopted Park Plan.

Discussion continued about future developments at Autumn Meadow Park, since no more land was available for acquisition. Members discussed a possible half-court for basketball, and paving part of the parking area for basketball.

Mr. Tylka said that these parks seemed to be event-driven, since most residents had large yards and did not need to go to parks to relax or hang out. Ms. Kim said that she belonged to a mothers' group that meets at different parks, but they never came to Autumn Meadow because there was very little to do.

Mr. Fennessey said that the key was to come up with a variety of activities for a variety of ages, and Autumn Meadow Park was easier for kids to get to (as opposed to Halfmoon Park, because people have to drive here or cross Route 550). Ms. Steele raised the question if parks that kids can not walk to should be expanded.

Mr. Kirsten said the consensus seemed to be enhancing existing park land and altering the park plan's future locations. Ms. Liggett said that fee-in-lieu money from a developer can be used for recreational enhancements, instead of land acquisition, as long as the residents of the development have access to the park where the enhancements are located.

Mr. Fennessey summarized the discussion as follows:

- improve existing amenities at existing parks,
- reduce number of future parks, and
- ensure that there would be a future trail to connect these locations 50 years from now.

Mr. Kirsten said he would like to see a shared road bicycle trail that minimized the land needed to be acquired. One complication dealing with Autumn Meadow Park was the proposed site of a new municipal building. He also said that Ms. Steele could be a good liaison between the PC and PRB.

Ms. Liggett asked if the Weaver Ball Field and Loveville Park should be removed from the Existing and Proposed Future Parkland, since there was less expansion in the western part of the Township than in the eastern part.

Ms. Del Corso asked what the next step was, and Ms. Liggett said that staff could identify roads that could be used as shared roads for walking/biking and bring that to PC. The PRB should make recommendations on specific enhancements for Autumn Meadow Park.

7. Adjournment

Motion. Mr. Stevens moved to adjourn. Mr. Finkelstein seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Gartner
Recording Secretary