

**HALFMOON TOWNSHIP**  
**Planning Commission Meeting**  
**May 15, 2012      7:00 pm**

Present: Bob Eberhart, Larry Fennessey, Jordan Finkelstein, Lorin Nauman  
Absent: Danelle Del Corso, John Stevens, Joe Tylka  
Others present: D. J. Liggett, CRPA; Susan Steele, Township Manager; Tom Zilla, CRPA; Eric Vorwald, CRPA; Melissa Gartner, recording secretary

**1. Call To Order**

Secretary Mr. Finkelstein called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

**2. Citizen Comments**

none

**3. Approval of May 1, 2012 Minutes**

Motion. Mr. Nauman moved to approve the minutes of May 1, 2012. Mr. Fennessey seconded. Vote: 4-0.

**4. Reports**

a. BOS Update

Ms. Steele reported that at last week's meeting, the BOS agreed to waive the fire protection requirements for the water storage tank and the 75,000-pound road for the Brown property, but did not waive the sprinkler requirement. The applicant returned and asked the BOS to reconsider, but the BOS denied the motion to reconsider. The applicant has since requested the requirements for the water storage tank. The sprinkler estimate is \$5,950 and the water storage tank is \$8,950. The other main order of business was a discussion of the OSP advance payments. The Township has advanced over \$1,000,000 in advance payments for the OSP. The Township has approximately ten properties with a mortgage in front of them. When there is a mortgage placed before the Township lien, an approval letter is required from the mortgage company. Once a property is placed in the OSP, the development rights are tied to a 99 year lease and the appraised value of the property decreases. If a property goes into foreclosure the Township can lose its standing. There may not be anything the Township can do about these properties retroactively.

There was also discussion with the PRB regarding the reservation policy and possible new procedures for parks. The Centre Bulldogs have a lease and Halfmoon Little League will need a lease.

Mr. Eberhart asked for clarification on the fire suppression waiver. Previously, the requirements exempted developments of four or fewer lots. In 2011, when the fire protection ordinance was codified, that exemption was left out. Ms. Steele reported that at this time, the BOS does not want to restore this exemption. Ms. Liggett said this issue may arise again with future subdivisions.

Any property not on a community water system will need a sprinkler system or water source for fire protection. The BOS had an opportunity to restore the exemption, but voted to leave the exemption out. PC members discussed this issue and argued the validity of the exemption. Some members supported making a statement in support of the exemption.

Ms. Steele noted that the 75,000-pound street requirement doesn't meet any street in the Township. One suggestion is to invite the Fire Chiefs from Port Matilda and/or Warriors Mark for more background information on the fire suppression requirement or a possible exemption. Currently there are not enough fire hydrants adequately distributed throughout the Township to address fire protection at residences served by public water. Ms. Steele noted that Harris Township also allows no exemption for four or fewer lots and it generates a lot of problems with water storage tanks. Also, community water vs. private wells could be a non-issue when no one can guarantee the water flow of the public water supply.

Members requested Shawn Kauffman (Emergency Management Coordinator), Rick Day (Upper Halfmoon Water Company) and Steve Bair (Alpha Fire Company) attend a future PC meeting to answer questions regarding water supply for fire protection.

Motion. Mr. Eberhart moved that the PC should re-evaluate the Township fire protection requirements in the subdivision code. Mr. Nauman seconded. Vote: 4-0.

Ms. Liggett offered to contact Mr. Bair, Mr. Kauffman, and Mr. Day. Mr. Nauman will contact Roy Ellenberger, Warriors Mark Volunteer Fire Company, to see what type of water supply the Fire Company needs for fire suppression. Mr. Nauman suggested asking an insurance company for suggestions on what level of fire suppression a house needs to have.

b. Zoning Officer's Report

No report. Ms. Steele said that Township staff will meet with Mr. Shuey on May 18 about the maintenance agreement for Morris Road, which is a private road. She added that staff is spending more time on private road issues than public road issues. The Ways have applied to subdivide a two acre lot, and that may come up at the next PC meeting. After the May 1 PC meeting, Mr. Maloney submitted his application on May 11 for a replot of his four lot subdivision.

c. CRPC Update

Ms. Liggett reported that there was a joint meeting between the Centre Regional Planning Commission and the Transportation and Land Use Committee. The CRPC discussed a requested expansion of the RGB in Harris Township to include the Harvest Fields property. The CRPC did not take action but will discuss the issue again at their June meeting and refer it to the General Forum. At the Joint meeting between the CRPC and the TLU group, they discussed the Comprehensive Plan and the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

## 5. Halfmoon/Patton Area Plan

Mr. Eric Vorwald and Mr. Tom Zilla presented the Halfmoon Township and Patton Township Area Plan Overview. Mr. Vorwald previously presented this information to the Patton Township PC.

This concept was identified in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan as an area needing a more focused examination, and a Steering Committee was established. Eastern Halfmoon and western Patton Townships are included in this area.

The Steering Committee created a policy document, with a guide for future development and land use. Chapters include water and sewer services, environmental protection, rural preservation and urban needs, specific land use needs, commercial and retail viability, and transportation issues.

Several major ideas from the report include:

- Adequate water supply and sewer service is necessary for future development.
- Sensitive environmental areas need to be protected.
- Services for urban and rural areas should not be equal.
- Certain uses may not be appropriate in all areas of the community.
- Density is necessary to support commercial uses (ex: village centers).  
Minimum 7-10 units per acre.
- Locally convenient but regionally inconvenient transportation connections are necessary.

Another component of the Area Plan was the Traffic Analysis, which was funded through the Metropolitan Planning Organization. A traffic study was conducted within the project area, and identified traffic volumes based on estimated future land uses. Mr. Eberhart asked about the large area proposed for mixed use development in the Township that had initially been planned as the Halfmoon Acres development. Since that high-density development is no longer on the table, Mr. Eberhart asked if it should be designated differently on the map. Mr. Vorwald said this would be discussed later.

Traffic analysis scenarios:

- Staff Scenario (most intense development scenario): This scenario included a proposed road network with seven connections between Halfmoon and Patton Townships but was still cumbersome for anyone trying to divert from Route 550.
- Full Build Out Scenario (Halfmoon Township Official Map roads), with several sub-scenarios (closing Meeks Lane at Route 550, closing Meeks Lane at Route 550 and Deerbrook Drive at Merganzer Way, and widening Grays Woods Boulevard):
- Full build at 50% Scenario
- Full build at 66% Scenario: The Traffic Consultant decided this was the most realistic estimation of development and it coordinated with the MPO growth forecast project.

With all three sub-scenarios, the quickest and most efficient route was still traveling on Route 550.

From the final scenario, (66% build out) the group identified seventeen mitigation measures to correct any failing traffic areas, as well as capital improvement funding needed to complete those measures. The Highway Safety Manual evaluates the

cost of an improvement and the benefits associated with reducing crashes at that location over time. The primary question is: How long does it take that benefit to accrue until it balances the cost of the improvement? It would take Halfmoon 3-6 years to balance these proposed improvements. Mr. Fennessey asked about the Route 550/Meeks Lane intersection. Mr. Zilla explained that there was actually a mixed set of crashes at that location. These projections are also considering a 50% increase in traffic through 2040.

The final part of the Traffic Analysis was the Route 550 Safety Study, focusing on five specific intersections. Crash data was evaluated and a field visit was conducted. Mitigations were identified and the annual benefit was calculated. Mr. Nauman asked about traffic coming from Warriors Mark because he felt traffic was slowly increasing after the initial drop when I-99 opened. Mr. Zilla thought the volume coming from Huntingdon Township was under 2,000 vehicles/day; he also thought that two thirds of the 6,300 vehicles identified in the study were added as one moved eastward through Halfmoon toward Patton Township.

The next steps in the process to conclude this project are review by both municipalities, a public meeting for open review, and endorsement by elected officials. Mr. Vorwald acknowledged that the municipalities may have existing ordinances that conflict with some of the policy document suggestions, and endorsement allows municipalities to agree to disagree.

Ms. Steele asked if the future land use map would become part of the Official Map, and Mr. Vorwald said the Official Map was already incorporated into this project.

Discussion continued on the intersection with Routes 322 and 550, with possible options like a roundabout and moving the intersection itself toward Ferne Hollow with new connector roads.

Mr. Vorwald asked the PC about the large area designated as mixed use in Halfmoon. Mr. Fennessey said that the yield plan and ridge overlay regulations that the PC is working on may eliminate mixed use on the north side of Route 550. Members suggested changing the land on the north side back to A-1 or single family residential designation. Ms. Steele asked Mr. Zilla if the Township could use this map to tell a developer that the Traffic Analysis showed that the local roads would not support a high density residential plan.

Ms. Liggett noted that the future land use map will be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan, which is a regional planning document. As a result, the future land use map from the Area Plan provides an opportunity for Halfmoon to let the other Centre Region municipalities know there is interest in this type of mixed use development in this area of the Township. Members mentioned that the original concept of the Rural Village Zoning District was to keep this level of growth at the eastern edge of the Township. Mr. Eberhart asked to review the 2003 survey in which Township residents did not support a higher density development in the eastern part of the Township. Ms. Steele suggested putting this land into the same type of Village District used for the Stormstown area. Ms. Steele volunteered to work with Ms. Liggett to prepare different zoning options for this particular area of land. Mr. Vorwald asked for feedback on the Area Plan and future land use map in the next month so this information can be added to the Comprehensive Plan.

## 6. Shared Driveways

Ms. Liggett reviewed previous discussions about issues relating to shared driveways and accesses. The current Driveway Ordinance states, "Shared driveways in a rural preservation development shall serve no more than four lots and/or residences." As a result of recent discussions with the County 9-1-1 Administrator and local fire officials, when more than two lots are served by a shared driveway, it becomes difficult for emergency personnel to quickly assess which address they are responding to. The proposed revision to the Driveway Ordinance would remove the reference to rural preservation development, so the ordinance would be applicable across the Township. Therefore, the proposed change to the Driveway Ordinance would read, "Shared driveways shall serve no more than **two** lots and/or residences."

Mr. Nauman asked if the Township allowed private roads. Ms. Liggett said that there are provisions for private roads within developments. She explained some differences between a private road and a driveway:

- private roads must have a 33' right-of-way
- private roads must be built to minimum standards for subsurface and a mud-free construction
- driveways do not require either of these

One recent example of a property that illustrated this shared driveway issue is the Maloney country estates property. Because there are so many environmental features along the existing lane to access the lots, Mr. Maloney did not have 33' available as clearance to build a private road, and because the ordinance allowed four lots and/or residences to use a shared driveway, he could take advantage of that opportunity.

Ms. Liggett also explained that PennDOT regulations state that a minimum use driveway serves no more than 25 vehicle trips per day. This is the equivalent of two lots. Changing the Township Driveway Ordinance would be in keeping with PennDOT requirements. Other local municipalities have the following regulations:

- Harris: allows a common driveway along a property boundary that serves two lots
- College: doesn't allow shared driveways
- Ferguson: allows a shared driveway that serves up to four lots
- Patton: allows a shared driveway that serves up to four lots in a rural preservation development

The issue of emergency personnel being able to identify where people live is a significant one and has been problematic when more than two lots share a driveway. Mr. Nauman asked who enforced the provisions of the subdivision plan, because he is aware of two homeowners at the back of Apex Lane who are having difficulties with driveway and address issues. Ms. Steele said the Township has no enforcement mechanism; the only way to force a developer to follow through on written promises is for a resident to sue the developer.

Ms. Liggett asked whether the PC preferred to have the Driveway Ordinance as a stand-alone ordinance, or would prefer it have it included in the Subdivision

regulations under "Streets." If the PC does not want the option for a waiver of the regulations, it should be left as a stand-alone ordinance.

Motion. Mr. Fennessey moved to refer the Driveway Ordinance to the BOS with a recommendation for approval. Mr. Eberhart seconded. Vote: 4-0.

Mr. Fennessey suggested putting a link on the website showing a map of the private roads, Township roads, and shared driveways.

## **7. Matters of Record**

- The next PC meeting will be held on June 5. Potential agenda items include a review of the Brooks and Sharon Way Subdivision Plan.
- Two regional workshops on the Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area are scheduled for June 4 and 20 at the Millbrook Marsh Nature Center. PC members discussed canceling the June 19 PC meeting so members can attend the June 20 regional workshop.

## **8. Adjournment**

Motion. Mr. Nauman moved to adjourn. Mr. Fennessey seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Melissa Gartner  
Recording Secretary