

**HALFMOON TOWNSHIP**  
**Planning Commission Meeting**  
**June 16, 2015**

Present: Jason Little, Chair; Lorin Nauman, John Stevens, Melissa Gartner, Danelle Del Corso, Jeff Martin

Absent: Sam Evans; Nicole Gross, Recording Secretary

Others present: D. J. Liggett, CRPA; Susan Steele, Halfmoon Township Manager;

**1. Call To Order**

Chairman Little called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. Citizen Comments**

None

**3. Approval of June 12, 2015 Minutes**

Mr. Nauman moved to approve the June 12, 2015 minutes. Mr. Stevens seconded. Vote in favor was 6-0.

**1. Reports**

a. *BOS Update* –

Ms. Steele reported that the BOS meeting on May 28, 2015 included a “run-through” of the presentation the Board will be making to the General Forum on June 22, 2015. The purpose of the presentation is to provide the regional elected officials with the background and reasoning behind Halfmoon Township’s zoning analysis, proposal to adopt zoning changes to implement the Future Land Use Map, and possible request to extend the public sewer service boundary. Ms. Liggett reported that the BOS voted unanimously to direct the PC to continue its work on the mixed use zoning district with a deadline of Spring 2017 for completion of the zoning ordinance and submission of a Development of Regional Impact application for the extension of public sewer to serve the “mixed use” area shown on the Future Land Use Map. She noted that Mr. Kirsten expressed reservations about the extension of public sewer, noting that higher density development in the “mixed use” area would not necessarily require public sewer.

b. *Zoning Officer’s Report* –

Ms. Steele reported that several zoning permits have been issued for residential construction in Trotter Farms. The development is building out.

c. *CRPC Update*-

Mr. Little noted that the CRPC meeting was canceled in favor of a Peer to Peer planning workshop. He noted that a de-briefing of this item is next on the agenda.

d. *Open Space Board Update* –

Mr. Nauman stated the next meeting is scheduled for July 1, 2015.

## **2. De-Brief of the Peer to Peer Workshop**

Ms. Liggett noted that the Peer to Peer Workshop, held on June 4, 2015, focused on zoning issues and was presented by Mr. Matthew Crème with the law firm Nikolaus & Hohenadal. Mr. Little stated that he was unable to attend, and asked for comments on the session. The PC members were generally disappointed with Mr. Crème's focus on Lancaster County and the lack of time for discussion among the municipal planning commission members. They noted that Mr. Crème did offer some positive perspective on the issue of "downzoning" of property, suggesting instead that it be called "right zoning." They also noted his advice that if municipalities can demonstrate a thoughtful and well-reasoned approach to rezoning, they would fare better in a court of law. He also pointed out that "right zoning" does not remove all value from a property and he suggested that municipalities look at a property owner's intent when considering zoning changes.

Ms. Liggett noted that representatives of the Harris Township Planning Commission have expressed an interest in meeting jointly with the Halfmoon Township Planning Commission to discuss common interests around rural preservation. The PC members agreed that they would like to have a joint meeting with Harris Township. Ms. Liggett will work to set up a meeting later this year.

Ms. Liggett reported that a summary report of the Peer to Peer Workshop is being prepared and will be distributed to the municipal planning commission members when it is complete.

## **3. Future Land Use Map - Mixed Use Area Zoning and Sewer Service**

Mr. Little noted that the PC members agreed to complete a SWOT analysis to help identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats presented by the proposal to rezone the "mixed use" area along the eastern boundary of the Township. The PC reviewed the comments from each member and compiled them into a single SWOT page. After a brief discussion of the internal and external factors to be considered in reviewing the SWOT, the PC members re-aligned the statements to more appropriately match the category (strength, weakness, opportunity or threat) they belonged to. The attached DRAFT copy of the SWOT is made part of the record for this meeting. Mr. Little agreed to review the document to remove redundancies and to provide a copy for PC review prior to the July 7, 2015 meeting.

Mr. Little noted that the PC will be meeting with two of the BOS members (Barb Spencer and Mark Stevenson) at the July 7, 2015 meeting to review the results of the SWOT and discuss the process for moving forward with the zoning analysis.

Ms. Del Corso noted that the SWOT could provide the basis for a public awareness campaign to get the word out to residents of the Township about the zoning analysis and potential future changes.

## **4. Matter of Record**

- a. The next meeting of the Planning Commission will be July 7, 2015 and will include a discussion with members of the BOS on the proposed "mixed use" zoning area.
- b. The 2014 Population Estimates for the Centre County municipalities have been released by the U.S. Census Bureau and were posted to the webpage.

- c. Ms. Liggett announced that she would be retiring from the Centre Region Council of Governments at the end of the year. She thanked the PC members for their hard work and noted that it has been a pleasure to serve as the Halfmoon Township local planner. She noted that as the CRPA transitions to a new planner for the Township, she will introduce the person and help to bring them up to speed on the activities of the Planning Commission. The PC members expressed appreciation for Ms. Liggett's work with the Township and wished her well in retirement.

## **5. Adjournment**

Motion was made by Mr. Stevens to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Del Corso seconded. Vote in favor was: 6-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:59 p.m.

/dj

## SWOT ANALYSIS

### Strengths

1. Supervisor support - S
2. land location - S
3. progressive township board willing to listen and take risks - S
4. attractive community where people want to live - S
5. committed township staff and Planning Commission volunteers that care about the community - S
6. potential to provide affordable homes and diversify township housing options - S
7. ability to limit 1.0 acre lot developments which have strained township resources - S
8. provides the Township an area to zone for industrial, commercial and denser residential properties - S
9. pro-active rather than reactive development lets twp have more voice in what is built and where - S
10. concentrates higher density on eastern side of twp to reduce through traffic from west - S
11. can provide for public sewer for limited area with natural block for sewer to the west - S
12. new development means added revenue for twp - S
13. allows for development in area of twp not recommended for on-lot sewage disposal - S

### Weaknesses

1. land sensitivities - W
  - water
  - Scotia Range habitat/corridor
  - wetlands (vernal pools)
2. public services sufficient at current level, but could be stretched too thin with additional service requirements - W
3. few viable land options outside suggested mixed use area - W
4. requires public sewer which requires a detailed permitting process and could promote urban sprawl - W
5. elevates the safety concerns that currently exist at Sawmill Road/SR 550 intersection - W
6. increases traffic along SR 550 - W
7. various environmentally sensitive areas exist in the southern mixed use area - W
8. loss of existing agriculture and forest land - W
9. significant changes to what landowners will be allowed to do with their land -- expect public pushback – W
10. reasonable to assume residents in new eastern development will expect similar level of services to Grays Woods/Patton - W
11. no walking connections between new eastern development and rest of twp - W
12. if public sewer does come to twp, will land prices go up proportionally and make housing costs unaffordable again (Halfmoon is a bargain because we DON'T have to pay for certain services/utilities – W/T
13. not enough study done to determine if “development will pay for itself” - W
14. economies of scale may not provide the scale of development developers are looking for - W
15. difficulty of getting businesses or retail to take root - W

## Opportunities

1. increased tax revenue -- O
2. entry level housing - O
3. new municipal building - O
4. improved park area? - O
5. modernization of twp – O
6. fits with potential UAJA project - O
7. motivated developer/s -
8. create economic diversity through affordable housing - O
9. introduction of sewer services into the township - O
10. township government and community facility modernization - O
11. potential to grow tax base
12. provides the township with the potential means to construct a new facility (e.g. Township building) to better serve the community - O
13. development may promote increases to tax base - O
14. ability to promote low impact development measures
15. open space development requirements can be written to protect sensitive or prioritized areas
16. small business opportunities may promote job openings in the Township – O
17. mixed use area would have a shared development “character” with the adjacent Patton Township properties - O
18. more riders on CATA buses! - O
19. ‘tiny houses’ community—even with smaller lots, smaller homes would maintain the visual space between
20. green development opportunities
21. development of regional impact process no longer requires unanimous approval - O
22. more diversification in housing could increase affordability
23. smaller lot sizes with public sewer could increase affordability
24. additional (non SR550) transportation links to the east
25. workplace options within twp with small commercial/office land uses

## Threats

1. “Toll Brothers-like” opposition
2. densities may not support developer interest
3. causes need for additional services not supported by gained tax revenue
4. increased traffic and potentially dangerous left turns—directly impacts EMS and police use
5. distance from dense employment opportunities and community support facilities may prevent “affordable housing” type residents (students, younger adults, new families) from moving to the proposed site. If we build it, will anyone come?
6. storm water management, well recharge area, and adverse environmental impact
7. school district capacity may be increased significantly resulting in diminished services for local youth and/or increased financial burden for taxpayers
8. impacts to State College Borough Water Authority’s Tier II recharge area may impact drinking water for local residents and may also place Halfmoon in a negative light within the community (e.g. Toll Brothers)
9. impacts to a unique wildlife habitat and important bird area
10. denser residential development could alter the general makeup of the Township residents and may shift the Township priorities
11. potential impacts to Township’s rural character along SR 550 corridor
12. eastern project dependent on public sewer and support of other municipalities - T
13. higher density population may identify with urbanized area and not support rural character of twp
14. creates 2 separate identities in twp (urban & rural)
15. residents may not be supportive
16. extension of public sewer into more of the twp
17. loss of rural character
16. environmental conflicts with wildlife, groundwater recharge property owner(s) wherewithal to develop - T

- 26. reduce trips out of twp for daily service needs with small retail uses
- 27. partner with adjacent twps for police/fire

- 17. may create 2 (or more) voting wards with differing constituencies - T
- 18. additional services could be costly to all residents

DRAFT

