

HALFMOON TOWNSHIP
Planning Commission Meeting
November 1, 2011 7:00 p.m.

Present: Danelle Del Corso, Bob Eberhart, Larry Fennessey, Jordan Finkestein, John Stevens, Joe Tylka
Absent: Lorin Nauman
Others present: D. J. Liggett, CRPA; Dave Piper, Zoning Officer; Susan Steele, Township Manager; Ginger Breon, property owner; Wayne Engle, Knapka Surveying, Inc.; Melissa Gartner, recording secretary

1. Call to Order

Chair Ms. Del Corso called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. Citizen Comments

None.

3. Approval of October 4, 2011 Minutes

Motion. Mr. Finkelstein moved to approve the minutes of October 4, 2011. Mr. Stevens seconded. Vote: 6-0.

4. Reports

a. BOS Update

Ms. Steele reported that the BOS approved the first draft of the budget. It was published and advertised to be adopted at the December 8 meeting for public hearing. It is also on the Township website and paper copies are available in the office.

b. Zoning Officer's Report

Mr. Piper said he recently issued a permit for a garage addition. He issued no permits for new home construction in 2011.

c. CRPC Update

Ms. Liggett said the CRPC discussed two issues:

- Harris Township was making changes to their Ag District zoning to add provisions to allow wineries. An existing winery had expanded operations over time and the Harris Township BOS wanted to make zoning changes to accommodate this expansion.
- A Patton Township business (the Sheetz at 1781 North Atherton Street) would like to expand the store and include more parking so they requested a change to the Patton Township ordinance to allow permeable pavers to be installed. The [Patton Township PG-CRPC recommended said](#) that maintenance [be addressed in the regulations is important](#), because if the [pavers](#) are not installed and maintained properly, they will no longer be permeable.
- The [CRPC Commission](#) also discussed the Comprehensive Plan and land use. There will be a joint meeting with Transportation Land Use on Monday, November 7.

5. Weaver/Breon Lot Consolidation Plan

Mr. Wayne Engle, Knapka Surveying, Inc. brought maps to show the lot consolidation plan for the Roy and Leon Weaver and Ginger Breon property along Davidson Road. The family would like to consolidate Tax Parcel 17-4-33A and Tax Parcel 17-4-33. (33A is a 2.609 acre lot, 33 is an 86.832 acre lot, and the total acreage of the new lot would be 89.441 acres.)

Ms. Liggett had asked Mr. Engle to show the locations of the wells and septic field on ~~the~~ small residential lot surrounded by the larger lot being consolidated tax parcel, but because that parcel is not part of the consolidated parcel, information regarding the smaller lot is not required it was exempted. Mr. Engle ~~included~~ added a ~~requested~~ signature for the SEO to the plan. ~~He also added an SEO lot~~, which Mr. Piper had recommended.

Ms. Liggett explained that since this is an agricultural lot and no development is proposed, a request for a waiver of sewage facilities planning can be used. Halfmoon Township allows for a waiver in this circumstance. Mr. Engle presented the signed waiver request form. He also mentioned that this plan does not create a lot line; it actually removes one which is unusual. Ms. Liggett noted that the Department of Environmental Protection requires sewage planning or a waiver of sewage planning any time a lot line is changed.

Mr. Engle showed a setback correction on the plan from 70 to 60 feet, added indications showing the soil types and ~~soil that passed~~ the perc testing locations, and discussed the 8.5 feet of additional right-of-way.

Ms. Del Corso asked if members had questions or wished for further discussion. Motion. Mr. Tylka moved to recommend the BOS approve the request for a waiver of sewage facilities planning and the Weaver/Breon Lot Consolidation plan. Mr. Stevens seconded. Vote: 6-0.

Ms. Del Corso signed the non-building declaration. Mr. Engle will send electronic copies of the plan to Ms. Steele and Ms. Liggett for the next BOS meeting on Thursday, November 10.

6. Public Meeting on Parks and Trails

Ms. Liggett shared a draft story board for PC members to review and discuss. The tentative PowerPoint has the following layout:

- Slide 1: A base map of Halfmoon Township
- Slide 2: The map with added blocks of color showing the parcels in each neighborhoods in the Township (mostly on the south side of Route 550)
- Slide 3: The Township population → this slide shows the newer developments on the south side of Route 550 account for 2300 out of 2600 people in the Township; 50% of our parks are on the ~~opposite wrong~~ side of Route 550 from the residential neighborhoods the road
- Slide 4: The neighborhoods map with added park locations, showing that (the parks aren't conveniently located ~~for~~ the neighborhoods)
- Slides for the PRB to include their information

- Halfmoon Park: ball fields, tennis courts, ice rink, playground equipment (great facilities, [not convenient to neighborhoods per location](#))
- Autumn Meadow: What they envision adding to that park
- Drop-in video: Include footage from the Municipal Lane intersection and the curve on Smith Road (difficulties for pedestrians and bikers to get from their houses to our parks)
- Slides: Maps of proposed trails and available share-the-road systems
- Slide: Examples of signage
- Interactive portion: Aerial map of Township and post-its for people to add their locations or comments directly onto the map

On behalf of the BOS, Ms. Steele wanted to see a list of the different ideas presented to the Board for park improvement, ~~including Other~~. She also suggested finding the statistic (68% or 78%) from the Comprehensive Survey on the priority to connect the parks. Ms. Del Corso suggested adding a slide on the history of why this initiative is needed. On the random survey, the #1 priority in the Region was connecting neighborhoods; in Halfmoon, it was #2 following marked bike lanes. Mr. Tylka said it would be helpful to compare the cost of building an approved bike path versus adding signage to the roads. Mr. Fennessey said Mr. Franson could generate the cost figures needed for a good comparison and list those numbers underneath the corresponding photos. Mr. Tylka said that unlike other Townships, Halfmoon does not have a retail industry to help the tax base so our residents would have to pay for all of this.

Mr. Eberhart mentioned a possible park on Houtz Lane, and Ms. Liggett agreed to incorporate that into the presentation. Ms. Steele said the history slide could also include the PC's first initiative to contact property owners for a walking trail, but that property owners were not interested in selling.

Members discussed including the sites of potential parks to generate public comments during the meeting. They also discussed widening the curve on Smith Road, the question of [widening the paved area of carving into](#) the right-of-way, and adding ~~macadam for~~ striping. The cost of building up a macadam shoulder would be much higher than just the paint needed for striping. Ms. Steele mentioned the project would need to follow PennDOT safety standards. She and Ms. Liggett said Mr. Franson was not optimistic about this project.

Ms. Del Corso said it would be helpful to show a list of what initiatives had been tried or investigated, what has been eliminated, and how we reached this point today. Ms. Liggett could bring the PowerPoint to the next PC meeting for review, and then the PC could prepare for the joint planning meeting with the PRB in January 2012. Mr. Tylka suggested a final slide listing the proposed next steps to move forward.

Mr. Fennessey said it is a good idea to ask the citizens present ~~to ask~~ what type of outdoor activities people are doing at home or at the parks. He added that Ms. Liggett could acknowledge actual and intended use of the Game Lands. Ms. Del Corso asked to include the Wildlife Corridor in that section. Discussion continued on whether the public was permitted to use the Game Lands; opinions varied on this subject.

7. Comprehensive Plan – Rural Resource Areas

Ms. Liggett said there was a lively discussion at the CRPA on what the Rural Resource Areas are. The question was: Are RRAs meant to restrict development activity so the land can be exploited for its true purpose (forest areas are to be kept for forestry, mining land for mining, agricultural lands for farming, etc.), or are RRAs supposed to preserve land because its natural/environmental features (water recharge, steep slopes, etc).

Ms. Liggett then displayed three maps showing Open Space program lands, Clean & Green program lands, and steep slope/riparian buffer locations.

Mr. Tylka said there is an additional complexity in that some land owners have put their land into the Open Space program and are receiving a [financial](#) benefit; classifying other land as a Rural Resource Area would prohibit other land owners from developing their lands and receiving an immediate financial benefit.

Discussion continued on whether land should be marked for development or protected from development. Mr. Eberhart thought there was a protection for limiting development outside the RGB, but Ms. Liggett explained that the Halfmoon Land Company's recent attempt to use innovative sewage technology opened the door for future developers. Mr. Tylka said that whatever action is taken on the RRA will affect the Open Space Program lease option. Ms. Steele said that the objectives of the OSP will need to be reviewed because some land parcels are being protected from development, but are not desirable for development (ridges, wetlands, etc.).

Mr. Tylka asked Ms. Steele to ask the BOS for their opinion on the RRA. If the BOS does not want to back this, then the PC does not need to invest time in pursuing this issue. Ms. Del Corso asked Ms. Liggett to clarify the definition of RRA, and if the RRA is only for 'specific purpose' land, then a new label should be created to protect 'natural features' land.

Mr. Tylka clarified that Pennsylvania's Clean and Green program pays a property owner as long as he/she participates; when the owner leaves the program, he/she must pay back 7 years of back taxes. Ms. Steele said that the Township does not see a large financial benefit from C&G because property owners only pay 25% of their assessed value on C&G land rather than the 50% they would pay for a home on that land. The OSP and C&G maps show land that is already partially supported by a governmental body.

Ms. Liggett explained that [Patton Township uses a yield plan to determine the number of housing units that can be constructed on a parcel. She noted that developers should not assume they can build ~~the~~ 'one unit per acre'-system ~~does not work~~](#) because not every acre will pass the perc test. Previously, on-lot septic systems were relatively inexpensive and could be used on larger lots. Now, because of the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategies and other clean water strategies, the cost of these septic systems is going up, and the cost of innovative technology systems is going down. In the next ten years, the cost difference between these systems may be negligible. While the market is down, there is a small time cushion to plan for these changes.

Mr. Stevens asked how Ms. Liggett would present this to the BOS, and she explained she would describe discussions from the Comprehensive Plan and PC

meetings, and then explain that the Township's current Agricultural zoning does not prohibit residential development (e.g., Orchard Creek, Trotter Farms, etc.). Does the BOS want the PC to look at this issue, and are they interested in strengthening the Ag zoning requirements even if it affects the OSP and restricts other large land owners from developing their land? Members agreed with Ms. Liggett's summary of the issue.

Mr. Finkelstein asked if they would ask the current BOS or wait for the upcoming election. Consensus was for Ms. Liggett to present this at the BOS meeting on November 4.

8. Matter of Record

The next PC meeting is scheduled for November 15.

9. Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Gartner
Recording Secretary