

HALFMOON TOWNSHIP
Planning Commission Meeting
November 13, 2012 7:00 pm

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

1. Call To Order

Chair Ms. Del Corso called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Citizen Comments

Mr. Stevens stated when he drove down Ira Lane and turned right onto Route 550, he found a BMW passing a car headed out of town on the left. This put the BMW into the space he was legally about to turn into. Mr. Stevens said there is no signage alerting of the Ira Street intersection for 550 drivers headed out of town. Since drivers do have adequate straight-line sight, some will try to pass and be unaware that the intersection exists. Ms. Steele said Route 550 is a state facility and she would pass along Mr. Stevens' comment to PennDOT.

3. Approval of October 16, 2012 Minutes

Motion. Mr. Nauman moved to approve the minutes of October 16, 2012. Mr. Stevens seconded. Vote: 6-0.

4. Reports

a. BOS Update

Ms. Steele reported that the BOS finished the budget, which will be published on the Township website this week for public hearing. There will be a tax increase this year. On Election Day, Ms. Steele and Ms. Smith took names of those interested in serving on Township boards and commissions. They collected approximately 14 names. Mr. Fennessey would like to be reappointed to the PC, but another individual would not like to continue. The BOS will conduct interviews in December for the vacancies. A thank-you dinner for the BOS members, Township staff, Ms. Liggett, and Ms. Yurchak will be held at the Grange Hall in early 2013. Lasagna and salad will be provided and others can bring a side dish to share.

Ms. Steele also said the BOS has been working with the future land use. Local managers have been working with the DRI process. All proposed changes are contingent upon being consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. At the last meeting in November, a revised tentative Implementation Agreement will be presented to the General Forum on November 26 for comments. Ms. Steele will ask Mr. May and Ms. Liggett to attend the first BOS meeting in December to respond to questions about the changes.

Mr. Stevens said he received his Clearwater Conservancy newsletter and he noticed the parking lot had been constructed. He inquired about the residents from Trotter Farm who had previously objected to the parking lot. Ms. Steele explained that the parking lot was already part of the subdivision plan, so it was never in jeopardy. Mr. Hilshey also spoke to the residents before it was constructed. The issue seems to have been resolved.

b. Zoning Officer's Report

Ms. Steele reported that DEP rejected Mr. Maloney's sewer planning module for the re-plot of his 5-lot subdivision. The plan will not be approved until Mr. Maloney makes the required revisions.

c. CRPC Update

Ms. Del Corso said that the November 8 CRPC meeting was a joint meeting with the Transportation and Land Use committee. The primary agenda item was a review the Comprehensive Plan elements, comments, and major issues raised. The draft Comprehensive Plan will be referred to the municipalities for comment in early 2013. Ms. Liggett said the goal of the joint meeting was to review all of the comments staff received from the municipal planning commissions on the different elements. Staff had tried to reconcile the comments and draft revised language as necessary. All comments will be inserted into the document and the draft Comprehensive Plan will be referred out to the municipalities in December. The BOS may refer the Comprehensive Plan back to the PC at that point, or might not. Ms. Steele suggested scheduling the 2013 PC work plan meeting for early February, rather than the first meeting in January, so she and Ms. Liggett have more time to discuss the Board's intentions regarding the Comprehensive Plan and the activities that will come forward from that document.

5. Official Map

Ms. Liggett reviewed that in 2004, the BOS adopted an ordinance to establish the process for adoption of an Official Map. An Official Map identifies the general location of future public facilities on a municipal map. However, these are "paper" facilities that will only exist if the municipality moves forward to purchase or acquire the land. Including these facilities on the Official Map reserves the location for future use and offers a temporary protection from development. For example, one feature illustrated on the Official Map is a proposed park on Houtz Lane. Because this is included on the Official Map, any developer coming into the Township with a plan for that property must notify the Township of the intent to develop. The Township then has one year to take action: either to purchase the property, negotiate with the developer for dedication of the property, or to allow the property to be developed. After one year, if the municipality takes no action, the reservation lapses.

Ms. Liggett said that proposed facilities on the Official Map should be serious contenders, not items on a wish list, and should be things that the BOS, PC, PRB and other municipal boards have discussed for future facilities. The current draft of the Official Map includes additions that came from the Parks Plan, the town hall meeting, and implementation discussions from that town hall meeting. She wanted to present the

draft Official Map to the PC since it has been a while since the PC last discussed it as part of the parks and trails discussions. The coloration and labeling will change slightly when published and adopted. The current coloration was to highlight changes for PC discussion.

Red lines indicated shared roads (some of which will be signed and marked to indicate shared use). Collector roads, such as Smith Road, Loveville Road, that can be widened to accommodate pedestrians and bikes will be, and those roads, such as neighborhood streets, that cannot be widened will have increased signage to alert motorists to share the road with pedestrians and bicyclists. Dashed light blue lines indicated future trail locations. Since Lone Pine Road (at the end of Sawmill Road) is a private street, the Township would have to take some action with the property owners to acquire an easement to use it as a public trail. The trail that goes through Trotter Farm development is an emergency access pathway, so the Township does not have to take action for use of that facility. The section that crosses the Wildlife Corridor is a missing link that will also require action and coordination with ClearWater Conservancy. One change on this draft Official Map from the one that was previously adopted, is the removal of a proposed future road across the Wildlife Corridor.

Mr. Eberhart asked if anyone had asked Clearwater Conservancy about constructing a trail across the Wildlife Corridor. Ms. Liggett said Mr. Hilshey indicated support for a walking path, but will not permit bicycle riders. Bicycles would only be allowed if they are walked across the property. Then, Mr. Eberhart asked why the "share the road" segments are shown on the draft map, since they already exist as Township roads. Ms. Liggett explained that the map can include existing roads and by including the whole proposed trail system, the Township is illustrating the entire loop. It lets the residents know where these facilities are planned, it is a tool for the BOS to use in preparing its capital improvement plan, and it helps to give the project more weight should funding become available through DCNR.

Ms. Del Corso noted that the trails shown are the result of the Parks Plan, and the reason the trail is shown along existing roads is because there is no access across private property within neighborhoods that have already been developed. She asked if there should be trails added to the mixed use area planned for the eastern end of the Township. Ms. Steele and Ms. Liggett said the end of Sawmill Road, near Brown Circle, could be shown as a future trail location. Ms. Liggett said that the other missing link connects Shanelly Drive and Ira Lane across an opened easement within the neighborhood. She noted that the adjacent residents are probably not aware that the easement even exists.

Ms. Del Corso asked about the process for the Official Map. Ms. Steele said it goes before the BOS, and the CRPC, and will also be presented at a public hearing. Ms. Liggett also said it goes to adjacent municipalities and the Centre County Planning Agency. There is a 45 day period for public comment, after which the BOS can take action to adopt it.

Mr. Eberhart asked if the proposed road connections adjacent to Patton Township will align with proposed roads in Patton. Ms. Liggett said she did not think that Patton had an Official Map, but these proposed road locations came from the Halfmoon/Patton

Area Plan so that roads did not abruptly end at Township lines but continued in an efficient and logical manner into the adjacent municipality.

Mr. Nauman suggested continuing the "shared road" designation along Shanelly Drive to the intersection with Lutz Lane, since it is already a Township road.

Motion. Mr. Finkelstein moved to forward the Official Map with changes to the BOS. Mr. Tylka seconded. Vote: 6-0.

6. Work Program Review

Ms. Del Corso said this item was scheduled to discuss planning for 2013, but since the planning might not begin in earnest until February, the PC would not need a long discussion tonight.

Ms. Steele said that for the December 13 meeting, the BOS wants to discuss the yield plan regulations and the driveway/private street language. Ms. Liggett said that the PC has completed work on these items and has recommended sending them to the BOS. She reminded the PC members that their discussions regarding shared driveways and private streets included:

- Shared driveway
 - serves no more than 2 lots
 - house numbers required at end of driveway and visible on the house
 - permitted in any zoning district within the Township
- Private road
 - serves no more than 4 lots
 - road name and house numbers required at end of driveway
 - 50' right-of-way
 - public road sub-base
- Public road
 - serves 5 or more lots
 - 50' right-of-way
 - asphalt top over public road sub-base

Before changes were made to the regulations, the PC wanted to send the concept to the BOS for approval. Ms. Liggett said that once the BOS reviews the proposal, revisions will be needed to the Township driveway ordinance, street standards, and fire regulations. Ms. Del Corso said the details of the PC's previous discussions are listed in the minutes from the September 18 PC meeting. Mr. Eberhart asked why house numbers were required to be visible on the house; Ms. Liggett said this is probably an existing requirement in the Township code.

Ms. Del Corso reviewed the 2012 work program:

- Parks Plan implementation
- Evaluation of agriculture/Residential Zoning District – Yield Plan
- Private Roads/Shared Driveways
- Ridge Overlay District
- Evaluation of Village Zoning District

Then she stated that the Official Map revisions and updates are the result of the PC work on their responsibilities for the Parks Plan.

Ms. Liggett said that the PC took action at their meeting in May to refer the Yield Plan revisions to Chapter 215 (Subdivision and Land Development) of the Township

Code to the BOS with a recommendation for approval. This is also waiting for the attention of the BOS, since the BOS themed agendas did not exactly align with the work the PC completed.

Ms. Liggett said the PC has not yet discussed the ridge overlay district, but it is related to future land use. Ms. Liggett noted that the ridge overlay regulations require a property owner to look at the environmental features on the property and consider the location of steep slopes and colluvial soils before developing. In addition to any underlying zoning in the area, if steep slopes and poor soils exist at the site, the developer must consult with a soils scientist to determine the best location for construction to prevent runoff and negative impacts to downstream properties. This will be continued in the 2013 PC work program.

The PC did not evaluate the Village Zoning District in 2012. Ms. Del Corso asked what specifics are desired for the outcome when evaluating the village district. Ms. Steele recommended that the PC focus on what it wants the whole mixed-use area to be as part of the future land use discussion, rather than just looking at the Village zoning district.

Ms. Liggett said the PC spent a lot of time in 2012 reviewing the Comprehensive Plan. It is important to recognize that use of time, in addition to the other work completed.

Ms. Steele said that since the Township is putting the OSP on temporary hiatus, it might be helpful to consider if there is any other mechanism available to protect agriculture. The BOS will look for innovative ways to achieve down-zoning without actually down-zoning. Mr. Tylka said that the yield plan will help land owners understand the development potential of their land. Mr. Nauman said it might be fruitful to approach the landowners who already put their land into the OSP and ask if they could support zoning that would allow 1 house/50 acres. Ms. Steele and Ms. Liggett said that if the Township can identify which properties are significant and should be preserved, perhaps the Township can work with the developer to suggest that higher density can be offered within the mixed-use area if the developer works with a land owner in the western end of the Township to preserve the land.

Mr. Finkelstein asked about the status of a new municipal building. Ms. Steele said it is on the seven-year plan. Mr. Finkelstein cautioned that if the building is unhealthy, then residents need to pay raised taxes for a healthier community building. Mr. Tylka said it would be good to have a real discussion on promoting or branding the Township. Ms. Steele said the Township needs to brand itself and decide who it is/who it wants to be. If Halfmoon wants to stay rural, promote rural and draw in those new residents who share that vision.

Ms. Del Corso said the first meeting in February will continue these discussions.

7. Matters of Record

- The next PC meeting is scheduled for November 20. Agenda items will include a continued discussion of the fire protection regulations with Roy Ellenberger, Warriors Mark Fire Company, and Sam Connor, Port Matilda Fire Company. Ms. Del Corso asked PC members to review the PC minutes from July 17 before next week.
- Ms. Liggett said there was a referendum on the ballot to raise taxes in Harris Township for the acquisition of open space. It failed by 37 votes. The Harris group

met for two years and was comprised of members from every neighborhood, but their efforts were narrowly defeated.

- Mr. Stevens asked if the PC should be considering a future location of a large COLDS system in the event there was a failure of septic systems along the creek. Ms. Liggett said this is a good topic for a future discussion and could be included with the discussion of advanced wastewater treatment.

8. Adjournment

Motion. Mr. Nauman moved to adjourn. Mr. Stevens seconded. Vote: 6-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Gartner
Recording Secretary