



**HALFMOON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES ° TUESDAY – April 2, 2019 ° 7:00 P.M.**  
*100 Municipal Lane, Port Matilda, PA 16870*

**In attendance:** Lorin Nauman, Andrew Meehan, Jeff Martin, Mark Paget

**Others attending:** Jim May (CRPA)

## Call to Order

7:05pm Lorin Nauman called the meeting to order.

\*Note: Leah Davis has resigned from the Planning Commission

## Action Items

### **Approval of Minutes**

Motion: Mr. Martin moved to approve the minutes of the March 19, 2019 meeting as is. Motion was seconded by Mr. Meehan. Minutes approved as is.

## Discussion Items

### **1. Continued Discussion – Proposed Amendment to the Village Zoning District (VZD)**

Mr. Nauman proposed to either keep the existing document and make changes or totally remove and start over.

**Comment:** Currently we have a zoning ordinance with no mechanism to enforce it. The goal is to have the ability to enforce codes.

Ken Soder is the zoning officer for Patton and Halfmoon townships. He makes the calls, reviews plot maps of new subdivisions, enforces codes, checks on complaints and writes up violations.

What kind of codes do we want (for Halfmoon township) and what do the people want?

**Comment:** Many people buy land without knowing or understanding the zoning.

Mr. May recently looked at the Pine Grove Village District (Ferguson Township) details. This district is small (1/8 mile) and has a simple ordinance with minimal codes.

### **Current Halfmoon Township VZD:**

- What does the VZD do for the current homeowners? (benefits)
- Landscape codes (vegetation and parking) are too restrictive
- Most of the lots in the VZD are too small to do anything. Why? When you consider small lots, setbacks and parking requirements, it is not possible.

- What are we taking away from homeowners? Nothing

**Goal of modifying the VZD:** to have a Zoning District with standards that the zoning officer can follow and enforce.

*Mr. Meehan:* What do we want in terms of commercial/business development?

All: very limited commercial development. There will be more home occupation business than new commercial use.

*Mr. Meehan:* Would people be unhappy if we remove commercial use within the zoning district?

No one wants a box store (Dollar General), so maybe no commercial development is best or write code that severely restricts development (example square footage of building).

*Mr. Nauman:* remove some parts of the ordinance, specifically lighting, parking, tree planting, buffering, landscape islands, flower boxes. We don't want too many specifics, rather we want minimum standards in place to allow for some flexibility for the homeowners but strong enough to hold violators accountable.

The current VZD was developed similar to land development plans on North Atherton. It came about when the Barr land was under proposal for development. The proposed sewer never happened and that limits commercial development (Not reasonable).

Purpose of the Initial VZD was to provide an avenue for different uses.

Current Regulation has 50% open space. Planning commission wants this removed.

Note: there is a proposed park on the map near Brothers Pizza

*Mr. Nauman:* Scrap the VZD and go with a mixed-use area (map already exists; came from Regional Master Plan). While the mixed-use map exists, zoning never adopted the ordinance. This would allow for multiple opportunities. Planning Commission can clean up the requirements, make it less restrictive and more user friendly and allow for some commercial use.

- Make a list of current uses
- Make a list of possible changes
- Develop an FAQ (Mr. May) for landowners
- Bring back the Multi-use map (Mr. May) and possibly change its name

*Mr. Nauman:* redesign and simplify the current regulations (on landscape and architecture), define permitted uses, make it specific enough to enforce.

*Mr. May:* Mr. Soder (zoning officer) wants specific ordinances so he can enforce them. If we start fresh (new) we can pull out some of the items we want to use from the current VZD.

## Land Value

1994 was the last tax assessment in the township. If a property has a land use change, then it must be reappraised. Until undeveloped land changes use, there is no **"Potential"** value. Landowners believe their land is worth XX, but until land use changes, value does not change.

Once the Planning Commission has a draft outline, they will reach out to landowners and homeowners involved (Possibly go door to door). They want to bring in some of these people to get initial feedback. Goal is to get a “soft” feel from the landowners so that when the draft goes to the Board of Supervisors, it has been reviewed and is a good plan. The Planning Commission will keep the Board of Supervisors informed, but will wait to provide plan until feedback from landowners.

**Goal:** A fair and transparent plan.

### What uses are appropriate?

See attachments posted to Planning Commissioners webpage and the April 2 agenda – what we have as a start.

## Reports

### **Centre Regional Planning Commission (CRPC) – Mr. Meehan**

State of the housing market – issue and concerns. What is happening now and looking at the goals for the Region. All the new student housing is a concern.

Thought: move single family homes converted to student housing back to single family homes

### **Halfmoon Township Open Space Board – Mr. Nauman**

Meeting tomorrow (April 3, 2019). Looking at cleaning up the language in the existing ordinance.

### **Board of Supervisors/Managers Report – Mr. Nauman**

#### Topics:

- Home occupation ordinance
- Final budget for Autumn Meadow park

Mr. Nauman suggested that Commission members watch the Supervisors meeting on CNET (to know the details)

Problem – Planning Commission does not get feedback from the Supervisors. Usually ideas are tabled or absorbed. Communication with Supervisors is necessary as the Planning Commission is the liaison between the public and the Supervisors. (Valentine Day Supervisors meeting is a good example)

### **Centre Regional Planning Agency Report (CRPA) – Mr. May**

Readvertised the senior planner position. This position is 33% Halfmoon township and 67% regional Sustainability planner position will be advertised soon.

## Other news

3 supervisors are up for reelection (Patty Hartle, Mark Stevenson and Barbara Spencer). There are 7 candidates running.

Meeting adjourned at 8:47pm. Mr. Nauman called for a motion to adjourn and Mr. Meehan seconded.