



HALFMOON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES ° TUESDAY – March 3, 2020 ° 7:00 P.M.
100 Municipal Lane, Port Matilda, PA 16870

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

Others attending: Corey Rilk (CRPA), Denise Gembusia (Township Manager)

Call to order

7:00 pm Mr. Nauman called the meeting to order.

Approval Items

Approval of Minutes from the January 21, 2020 Planning Commission (PC) meeting

Motion: Mr. Meehan motions to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Motion was seconded by Mr. Martin. Minutes approved.

Resignation of Ms. Villarreal as PC Member

For the past few months, getting a quorum for the PC meetings has been difficult. In early February, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) approved an ordinance which would allow the PC to contain no less than five (5) members and no more than seven (7) members, with the option of up to three (3) alternates. At this point, the PC has six (6) members, which still requires four (4) to make a quorum. Ms. Villarreal has asked to resign as a PC member and be assigned by the BOS as an alternate.

Ms. Villarreal has sent a resignation letter to the BOS.

Motion: Mr. Nauman motions to approve Ms. Villarreal's appointment as an alternate to the PC. Motion was seconded by Mr. Meehan. Motion approved.

Open Space Program – Fisher Property

During its January meeting, the Open Space Board discussed the Fisher Property easement application. Ms. Fisher has requested to be considered for a permanent easement of approximately 200 acres. The Open Space Board discussed offering a lease contract for the time being with the possibility of transitioning to a permanent easement in the future.

Note: Township does not have the monies to do a permanent easement at this time, so they are offering a 99-year lease for now.

200 acres is 2 parcels: 40 acres of woods, 160 acres of farmland and house along Rt. 550.

Open Space Board motioned to recommend approval of the application with the possibility of transitioning to a permanent easement in the future.

Open Space Board is working on a rating system (scoring system) of properties. Once developed, all current leased property will be scored, and the criteria will be used to determine permanent easements.

The current Open Space Program has around 3,000 acres in lease.

With Township Open Space ordinance, township has first lien on property (right of purchase) if property is sold. This is on the deed of property in the program. Open Space means township is leasing the development rights.

Motion:

1. Mr. Meehan motions to approve 40 acre Fisher property into Open Space Program, Mr. Martin seconds. Motion approved.
2. Mr. Meehan motions to approve 160 acre Fisher property into Open Space Program, Mr. Paget seconds. Motion approved/

Discussion Items

Review of Planning Checklist

Centre Region Planning Agency (CRPA) and Municipal staff have compiled a checklist for the plan review process. This checklist includes all the basic items required for plans submitted to the municipality. It will be submitted with Subdivision and Land Development Application. PC members should review and discuss the planning checklist.

Purpose: to have everything submitted together at one time (package) for Planning Commission to review (make the review process more efficient).

Side Discussion: Number of roads in the township.

There are currently 104 roads, and 53 are private roads.

Public road standards are based on PennDOT standards, but even township public roads (like Smith road) are narrow. Private roads are generally much narrower and single access (dead-end). Could an emergency vehicle like a firetruck get down these private roads and turn around?

Side Discussion: SALDO with the current four (4) lot exemption and the Rural Preservation District (RPD) standards.

- The 4-lot exemption: (1) eliminates the 50% open space requirement, (2) they do not have to build on a public road and (3) can have a shared driveway
- Do we need the 4-lot exemption? It was originally developed for farmers (to parcel off a section of property for family), but is now being used as mini subdivisions
- Mr. Nauman would like to see the 4-lot exemption removed from SALDO. He would like to see an exemption for farmers where 1 lot can be carved off the whole and called a 1-lot subdivision.
- Mr. Nauman would like to see "all new subdivisions must be on a public road" for safety reasons (fire suppression).

Review of Seifert Plan and Staff Comment Letters

A preliminary subdivision plan was submitted to the Township. Staff has reviewed the plan and plan/comment letters presented to the PC. No action required as this is just a review/discussion of the proposed plan.

Proposed development plan is to subdivide property off Beckwith Rd. Willing to upgrade current private road (Kayte Rd.) to public road so there is access to this property. Estimate from Hawbaker. Note: road must be a minimum of 250 feet long with a cul-de-sac.

Mr. Siefert wants to carve off one (1) parcel (1+ acre) at this time.

- Comment: The beginning of the road is a private easement; can a public road be built here? This private easement property is also very wet.
- Comment: Township wants to do the right thing

Manager Comments

Ms. Gembusia mentioned having a joint meeting with the Board of Supervisors, with the goal of working together on items. In the past, Ms. Steele was the liaison between the BOS and the PC.

Reports

Centre Regional Planning Commission (Mr. Meehan)

- Reorganizational meeting. Mr. Meehan is the vice chair again for the 2020 year.
- University survey.

Halfmoon Township Open Space Board (Mr. Nauman)

- Development of a Township Open Space rating (scoring) system for properties

Board of Supervisors/Managers report (Mr. Rilk)

- Towhill road – water access to the last lot on the road (for development)
- Pam Adams, Sustainability Planner with CRPA, did a presentation
- New manager (Denise Gembusia) started on Monday

Centre Regional Planning Agency (Mr. Rilk)

- Planning Commission Training on April 25 from 9 am-1 pm at Millbrook Marsh

Next meeting scheduled for March 17, 2020.

Call for adjournment at 9:31 pm by Mr. Meehan, Mr. Nauman seconded.