



HALFMOON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES ° TUESDAY – October 20, 2020 ° 7:00 P.M.
100 Municipal Lane, Port Matilda, PA 16870

ROLL CALL

Members In attendance: Chairman Lorin Nauman (in person), Andrew Meehan (video conference), Jeff Martin (video conference), Joe Soloski (video conference)

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

*Note – this will be a hybrid meeting (in person and video). Voting will be “Roll Call”.
Meeting will be recorded.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Those able stood and said Pledge of Allegiance.

CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS

No comments were offered.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public present to offer comments.

CALL TO ORDER

7:02 pm Mr. Nauman called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Mr. Soloski motioned to approve the October 6, 2020 Planning Commission (PC) Meeting minutes as presented. Motion was seconded by Mr. Martin and passed unanimously.

BUSINESS

Professional Development

Review of the Township Parkland Fee in Lieu Ordinance Chapter (166 E-Code)

Looking at how other townships handle fee in lieu parkland fee system and update the Halfmoon Township Parkland fee in lieu ordinance (166 E-Code).

Ms. Gembusia explained fee in lieu. We can't charge it, but it is an option for Developers instead of giving the Township park land (acreage). Fee in lieu can prevent the township from having small park land properties (1/4 or 1/2 acre in size) that the township must maintain.

Comments:

- Mr. Nauman – what we currently have as a draft is in alignment with other township ordinances.
- Mr. Nauman – how do we handle a 1 lot subdivision?
 - Currently, Fee-in-lieu option does not kick in until at least a 5-lot subdivision.
 - Ms. Gembusia: If you choose to subdivide, the developer can either pay the fee or dedicate land. Changed in draft document.
- Mr. Rilk - Fees
 - Halfmoon township current fee system is a formula: charge a per acre fee. \$50K/acre property value (fair market value) and fee is .05/acre of development
 - What about a flat fee (\$800-1000/lot)? It would be simple and easier to work with than the current calculation approach, but doesn't allow for land value changes.
 - At the October 6, 2020 PC meeting, Mr. Ceglar suggested a tiered approach for fees. The Township staff (and Mr. Rilk) do not recommend this approach. Simple is better.
 - At the October 6, 2020 PC meeting, Mr. Ceglar questioned whether small parcels of park land could be sold to adjacent landowners. The MPC does not allow this.
 - Mr. Nauman: What is the fair market value of land? That value changes over time, if we stay with the current calculation approach, the fair market value of land can be reviewed by the township staff (yearly) and adjusted when land value changes. The Board of Supervisors would need to approve any changes.
- Mr. Meehan – how do we deal with higher density (ex. Apartments) lots?
 - The current township zoning does not allow for higher density, but if zoning does change to allow higher density lots (a new Zoning District) in the future, the fee in lieu ordinance would need to be updated as well as SALDO.
 - if we have more density in a submitted new subdivision, more likely there will be park land.
 - Mr. Rilk: Note – we cannot have separate parkland fees for different zoning districts.
 - If in the future, lot sizes can be smaller (currently lots are 1 acre minimum), the fee in lieu will need to be updated.
- Mr. Nauman – Is there a breakeven point for the developer between providing park land and paying a fee in lieu? Possibly – decision is up to the developer.

Review of the actual draft document (Ordinance 166 E-Code)

Discussion and small changes to the wording in the draft document.

- 166-1: Applies to all subdivisions
- 166-4: Township engineer is added to the group of people who determine if the land is acceptable for dedication. Parkland criteria includes access to a public road (unless added to an existing park), parking space, slope and shape of land, floodplains, and stormwater management.

- Developer should know at time of submission of their subdivision plan whether parkland dedication or fee in lieu.
- Mr. Nauman: When is the fee-in-lieu paid? At time of submission or at time of approval?
- Overall goal of updating the ordinance is to clean up the wording so there is no need to go back and forth with developer multiple times.
- Ms. Gembusia: by 2021, plans must be submitted by the 15th of the Month.
- Mr. Nauman: What about Phased Developments (to avoid fees)?
- Mr. Rilk: The Planning Commission may want to consider if dedicated land is adjacent to township land, the parking requirement be waived – incentive to increase the size of township existing parks.
- Mr. Rilk: If township has a parks plan, they do not need a Parks Board (township does not have a Parks Board).
- Further discussion at next PC meeting.

STAFF REPORTS

Ms. Gembusia – Budget Meetings are currently going on.

1. Township is in a short fall.
2. Wilson Plan: the shared driveway agreement fell through. Homeowner was never part of the discussion for a driveway agreement/easement. The developer will need to change the plans and resubmit.
3. Mr. Rilk needs to provide 24-hour notice to cancel a Planning Commission (PC) meeting.
4. Ms. Gembusia and Mr. Rilk are looking at updating a few township ordinances in the near future.
 - Fire ordinance: rewrite to provide an incentive to put in sprinkler systems. Do not want added burden on the local Fire Department.
5. Mr. Gembusia: looking to involving the PC in ordinance updates. If they are written properly, waiver requests should be minimal.

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION BOARD LIASON REPORT

Mr. Nauman – There have been 5 property inspections with no problems to address. A letter was sent to all Open Space lease holders that they may be able to convert from a lease to a permanent easement. Provides an equal opportunity for everyone. The goal of the letter is to look for interest and then the board can use the rating system to determine priority, if the funds are available.

ADJOURNMENT

Call for adjournment at 8:36 pm by Mr. Meehan. Motion was seconded by Mr. Martin and passed unanimously.

Next Planning Commission Meeting is scheduled for November 17, 2020.