



HALFMOON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES ◦ TUESDAY – May 19, 2020 ◦ 7:00 P.M.
100 Municipal Lane, Port Matilda, PA 16870

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

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 March 3, 2020 Planning Commission (PC) meeting

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

Discussion Items

Review of proposed changes to the Riparian Buffer Ordinance (RBO)

CRPA and Municipal staff have edited the Riparian Buffer Ordinance. The current ordinance is more restrictive than Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) guidelines as well as other Centre Region Municipalities' Riparian Buffer Ordinances. The PC should review the proposed Riparian Buffer Ordinance and offer comments and suggestions.

- Current ordinance requires construction/buildings to be at least 100 feet from wetlands or stream banks. Most municipalities and DEP require a 50-foot buffer.
- Changes to RBO based on the proposed Siefert land development plan.
- Township staff proposes a change to a 50-foot buffer. This would be the total distance from wetland or streambank. They also recommend removing the statements of "25 feet of yard required" and "approved uses."

Comments:

#5 under Management of Vegetation (255.4)

#5 states "areas that cannot be revegetated shall be restored in compliance with Township requirements"

- Mr. Nauman stated that this wording is vague and cannot be enforced. He suggests removing #5
- Mr. Meehan asks, "What does DEP say?" ... very vague
- Ms. Gembusia suggests adding "as approved by the Township Engineer"

- Mr. Nauman states “Township Engineer would have the knowledge to mitigate any problems at the beginning and provide recommendations” before it would go to the Planning Commission and ultimately the Board of Supervisors for approval.
- Mr. Rilk states “we want changes to make this ordinance forward thinking and enforceable”

Farms: they can farm up to the water’s edge (there is no required buffer) if using acceptable practices (for fertilizer and manure discharge).

What about septic? Does that follow the 50-foot buffer?

Propose: Change the wording of #5 by adding the following: “... in compliance with Township Engineer’s recommendations”.

This would allow the Township Engineer to write up problems, Planning Commission would review to make sure they are in compliance before approving. This would put the pressure back on the Developer.

Region or Local items of Interest

PC members are encouraged to bring any items of interest forward to Staff.

1. Road length discrepancy (Mr. Nauman)
2. 4 lot exemption in the RPD (Rural Preservation District). Mr. Nauman would like to take this out and change to: “allow a 1 lot subdivision for farmer family member”
3. Open space. Ms. Gembusia stated that long term goals of the township are to increase open space property that the township owns. SALDO addresses this.

Reports

Centre Regional Planning Commission (Mr. Meehan)

- May 7th was first meeting (virtual using Zoom) since COVID-19 started
- Looking at Workforce housing
- Amended bylaws to authorize Zoom/remote meetings

Halfmoon Township Open Space Board (Mr. Nauman)

- Meeting last week via Zoom.
- Board of Supervisors placed the Fischer property on hold because county may provide some monies.
- Comment by Ms. Gembusia: Mrs. Fischer wants to move into a 99 year lease so the Open Space agreement process can move forward. If the county provides some monies, the 99 year lease can become a permanent easement.
- New Township Open Space rating (scoring) system for properties developed and sent to the Board of Supervisors for approval.

Board of Supervisors/Managers report (Ms. Gembusia)

- Open Space Scoring system approved by the Board of Supervisors.
- June 2 – voting (PA Primary)

- Meetings are by Zoom (Last meeting was May 14th)
- Ms. Gembusia still comes to the Township building for meetings so that there is an option for those that do not use /have digital access and want to join in.
- Mid-year report is coming soon.
- Strategic Plan Session proposal approved last week
- Question: How do we move forward with COVID-19 and get people involved?

Centre Regional Planning Agency (Mr. Rilk)

- COG Building is closed and will stay closed until the county goes “Green”
- Riparian Buffer Ordinance – sent to COG

The June 2, 2020 meeting is canceled due to the Pennsylvania Primary. The next meeting scheduled for June 16, 2020.

Call for adjournment at 8:10 pm by Mr. Meehan, Mr. Martin seconded.