



TOWNSHIP OF HALFMOON

487

100 MUNICIPAL LANE · PORT MATILDA, PA 16870
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HALFMOON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 19, 2024
6:00 PM

1. **CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mr. Stine called the meeting to order and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **ROLL CALL**

In attendance at this meeting were Mr. Stine, Mr. Bates, Mr. Jones, Ms. Hoover, Ms. Smith, and Mr. Rilk. Mr. Hartle attended over Zoom. Citizens in attendance were Dan Hughes and Lorin Nauman.

3. **OPENING ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- *Mr. Bates moved to approve the minutes from the February 20, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting. Mr. Jones seconded the motion. All are in favor; motion carried.*

6. **REVIEW OF RURAL PRESERVATION DEVELOPMENT (RPD) AMENDMENTS**

Mr. Stine started by saying this document has four main sections in it which are: yield plan requirements, Lot requirements, open land requirements, and dwelling permittance.

Ms. Smith stated that in Paragraph A on the RPD the board will need to define what conservation areas consist of.

Mr. Stine said that definitions are listed in A ii.

Ms. Smith then stated that Mr. Boeckel, former Halfmoon Township Mark Boeckel says the board needs to include maximum number of lots permitted under the RPD in A ii.

Mr. Stine stated that the maximum number of lots cannot be larger than what the yield plan determines. If the yield plan says you can plan for 50 lots, then you cannot plan for more. He said the board can work on getting a definition put into the lot standards.

Mr. Rilk agreed with Mr. Stine's clarification.

Ms. Smith moved on saying B. should maybe be moved to a different part of the RPD. She also stated that the defined minimum lot size (22,000 sq ft) would be difficult to enforce unless the lot has an available community water system because there would need to be 2 absorption areas on one lot.

Mr. Rilk said that a smaller lot size could be allowed if there was a community water system.

Mr. Stine had the board approve definitions for environmentally sensitive areas in E. Approved definitions will be: wetlands; flood planes; streams; steep slopes; and land under permanent easement. He said he didn't think Wellheads should be accepted.

Mr. Jones agreed about wellheads with the exception for community water.

Mr. Rilk agreed with Mr. Jones stating that wellheads will have to be zoned for community water, and that the developer would have to follow DEP requirements.



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Mr. Stine asked Ms. Smith to add language that there can be no wells unless approved by the TWP.

The board noticed a discrepancy in the language for development under permanent easement in section D (4) and E(a)[7]. Conversation followed.

Ms. Hoover asked how to satisfy open land requirements when there is a permanent easement. She wondered how much of the land would need to be open space.

Mr. Stine said that a developer cannot mix open land with open space.

Mr. Rilk stated that this paragraph (D(4)) states that you can.

Mr. Stine stated that the language needed clarified or removed.

Mr. Rilk said that this issue needed to be brought up to the solicitor.

Mr. Stine then moved on with accepting definitions for conservation areas. Approved definitions are: Land within the Centre County Heritage Inventory; Resources identified in the Historic Resources of the Centre Region Report by the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission; mature forest land; Hydric soils; class I and II soils; and unpaved right-of-ways. The board did not approve shelter belts and hedgerows and they eliminated railroads from unpaved right-of ways.

There was a citizen comment from Mr. Nauman asking about hedgerows. He wondered if hedgerows should be allowed to use as a buffer between developed property and farmlands etc.

Mr. Jones clarified that hedgerows are not being included because they want the open land to be contiguous and not contain barriers or dividers.

Mr. Stine led the board in deciding what the allowable uses for open land (J) should be. They decided allowable uses are: Agricultural uses on a minimum 2-acre lot; Conservation of water, soil, forest, and wildlife resources, areas for potable well water use, and areas for treatment/disposal of wastewater discharges; conservation of open land in a natural state, restriction for further subdivision, noncommercial recreation areas, neighborhood open land uses, and silviculture.

The board decided to further reduce the minimum lot size able to use their open land for agricultural uses to 2 acres. This would allow residents to have gardens without problem.

Mr. Hughes, citizen, asked what defined land in a "natural state."

Mr. Stine clarified that land in a natural state is defined as: woodland, fallow field, or managed meadow.

Mr. Hughes then asked if it would be appropriate to add in language about removing invasive species from the property.

Ms. Smith agreed to add a link to the invasive species list.

There was discussion about whether to keep parking spaces allowable for noncommercial recreational areas. Mr. Rilk stated that it is advisable to keep parking spaces in the document so there aren't any hazardous conditions with vehicles parking on the side of the road. He also mentioned that there is a parking standards document that would need to be followed.

Mr. Stine wanted clarification on what a noncommercial recreational area might be.

Mr. Rilk stated that it might be as simple as a walking trail.

The board decided to remove stormwater management areas as one of the allowable uses for open land.



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The board also decided to remove the phrase excluding off road vehicles and firearm ranges from the RPD as those wouldn't be allowed through zoning regardless.

Mr. Stine asked if pasturing/grazing would be an allowable use of open land.

Mr. Rilk said that pasturing would count as an agricultural use, so yes it would be allowed.

Ms. Smith stated that there are currently no restrictions for animal units per acre in the RPD.

Mr. Stine created several hypothetical property workups to make sense of some of the more ambiguous numbers in the RPD. The RPD requires 50% of a property to remain open land. Of that 50%, no more than 25% can be retention basins, wetlands, or steep slopes. This aligns with the board's goal to have open land requirements fulfilled by quality land and contiguous land.

Mr. Stine then asked Ms. Smith how soon the amendments on the RPD need to be finished.

Ms. Smith requested that they be finished sooner rather than later.

Mr. Stine asked if the amendments need to go to the BOS next month.

Ms. Smith thought the PC board should revisit the amendments again next month and then send to the BOS.

7. STAFF REPORTS

None

8. AUTHORITY, BOARD, AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Open Space Preservation Board
 - i. Mr. Stine recalled that the OSPB is doing much the same as the PC and reviewing their ordinances to clean up language and clarify things after their 5-year review.
- b. CRPC
 - i. Mr. Jones noted that there was no meeting last month. This month CRPC will be meeting to start their 10-year plan.
- c. Board of Supervisors
 - i. Ms. Smith stated that the BOS are going to advertise for bids on road projects. They also reviewed their agreement with Port Matilda EMS, and approved the Ellenberger plan.
- d. Professional Development- None

9. ADJOURNMENT

- *Mr. Jones moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Bates seconded the motion. All are in favor; motion carried.*

The meeting adjourned at 7:17pm

Respectfully submitted,

Meagan Beck

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