

The monthly meeting of the Lower Moreland Township Planning Commission was held on the above date in the meeting room of the Township Municipal Building. Present were Messrs. Chapman, Krebs, Cohen, Rubin, Mayer, Frey, Mrs. Friedrich Fogel, Planner Gabriel, Engineer Woodrow, Assistant Manager Hoffman, Commissioners Kuritz, Weir and Clerk Matyas.

Chair Fogel called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The minutes of the December 20, 2012 Planning Commission meeting were approved.

Multi-purpose Athletic Field-Lower Moreland Township Zoning Amendment Mr. Tim Woodrow, Township Engineer, talked about the history of this project, noting the purchase of Fairway Farms and the water main project on County Line Road. Mr. Woodrow explained that the current zoning of the properties does not allow athletic fields, recreational as a permitted use so a Zoning Amendment is proposed. Mr. Woodrow discussed that a Parks and Recreational (PR) zoning district would be more appropriate for this area.

Mr. Krebs made a motion for recommendation that the Board of Commissioners approve the zoning amendment as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Chapman and Mr. Mayer, Mr. Cohen, Mr. Frey, Mr. Rubin, Mrs. Friedrich Fogel and Mrs. Souder voted aye. The motion was carried as stated.

Zoning Code Update Mr. Stephen Gabriel, Township Planner, talked about the process of updating the Township Zoning Code, noting there was a zoning committee made up of Township Staff, Board members and Planning Commission members.

Mr. Gabriel explained that the zoning districts are different and there is a comparison to the old districts and the proposed ones. Mr. Gabriel noted that one goal of the update is to make the code much easier to use and understand. Mr. Gabriel explained that there are also issues that have come up since the Zoning Code was written that will be addressed with the update.

Mr. Gabriel talked about some of the differences between the old and proposed zoning districts noting lot size and uses.

There was a brief discussion about a cluster home development submitted to the Township.

Mr. Gabriel talked about more residential zoning district and noted that this proposal combines Apartment (A) zoning district and Mobile Home Park (MHP) zoning district. He talked about residential/commercial uses and where they are proposed throughout the Township. Mr. Gabriel noted that commercial would be low-impact. Mr. Rubin asked what low-impact meant and Mr. Gabriel replied professional offices, civil organizations, daycare and bed and breakfasts.

Mr. Gabriel talked about use of the North American Industrial Classification System when defining non-residential uses.

Mr. Gabriel noted the role of the Planning Commission is to review the update and make comments good and bad so issues can be discussed.

There is a discussion regarding apartments around train stations and creating an overlay district in the REV district to allow this use.

Mr. Krebs asked about the Township's comprehensive plan and how it was started and not finished. Mr. Woodrow talked about fair share concept and how it affected Townships years ago. Mr. Krebs asked if the Township is left open by not having a comprehensive plan and Mr. Woodrow replied that the Township feels there is a sufficient mix of uses so that they would not be susceptible to a curative amendment issue.

Mr. Gabriel explained that the Township can rely on Montgomery County's comprehensive plan to a certain extent and, a statement of community objectives will be included in the code upgrade.

Mrs. Friedrich Fogel asked why there is not a comprehensive plan for the Township. Mr. Woodrow explained that there is no funding for it but they are now focusing on the zoning code. Mr. Gabriel noted that Lower Moreland Township is a developed community where a comprehensive plan helps Townships that are still growing and building.

There is a discussion about parks including national standards and Township input when creating parks/recreational areas.

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Mr. Mayer asked why the zoning code was updated. Mr. Gabriel replied the code as a whole has not been reviewed in a very long time so some uses are irrelevant while other uses were never considered. Mr. Gabriel noted billboards, alternative energy, adult uses and clinic uses were addressed right away.

Mr. Gabriel reviewed the map with the Planning Commission members and there was a brief discussion.

Mr. Rubin asked about the fair share act and Mr. Woodrow gave the history of the act and how it applies.

Mr. Gabriel talked about the residential office district which is located along Huntingdon Pike. Mr. Gabriel explained that in this proposed district there are more office uses than retail uses so that is why it is a mixed use of residential and office. Mrs. Souder asked if any families live in this area. Commissioner Timothy Weir replied he believes there are some families and apartments.

Commissioner Weir talked about the zoning update and noted he was a member of the Zoning Hearing Board and how difficult it was as a member to properly interpret an older code which did not apply to issues being presented. The Board of Commissioners decided to update the code to address issues of the modern day. Commissioner Kuritz added that the clinic issue and a request from the Zoning Hearing Board prompted the zoning update.

Mr. Krebs asked if the Mobile Home Park zoning district was removed, would another area have to be rezoned. Mr. Gabriel stated it would depend on the community and what land was available.

Mr. Frey asked if any zoning districts allow cell towers or drug clinics and Mr. Gabriel replied that cell towers are allowed in most districts and drug clinics are allowed in a zoning district along the Turnpike. Mr. Gabriel noted that a definition of clinic is in the zoning update to help clarify issues in the future.

Mr. Mayer asked how new uses will be handled and Mr. Gabriel replied a provision in the ordinance would allow possible new uses to obtain zoning relief with a Special Exception. Mr. Gabriel explained that along with the Special Exception there will be criteria required to show the proposed new use will be appropriate in the requested zoning district. Commissioner Weir talked about how the Township Solicitor would get involved to help protect the Township.

Mr. Gabriel talked about the expansion of the REV district and new uses including an overlay district.

There was a review and discussion about the proposed map including new areas like the Village Center (VC) zoning district around the library.

Mrs. Friedrich Fogel talked about an area with large lots and the required lot size being small so that leaves those properties open for subdivisions. Mrs. Friedrich Fogel asked if a flag lot can be subdivided and Mr. Gabriel replied no.

Mr. Mayer talked about lot size changes and how that is difficult to live in or near areas with changes. Mr. Gabriel talked about the difficulty when figuring out lot size and where to draw the line.

Mr. Gabriel talked about getting the Planning Commission members copies of the proposed map and finishing the discussion next meeting. Mr. Christopher Hoffman, Assistant Township Manager, noted whatever progress was made here will then move onto the Board of Commissioners for review.

Commissioner Kuritz asked that Mr. Gabriel put lot sizes next to the zoning district to make it easier to understand.

Mr. Chapman, a member of the zoning update committee, talked about the new tables and charts that were created to make interpreting the code easier.

Legislative Review

Mr. Woodrow stated there was nothing new going on.

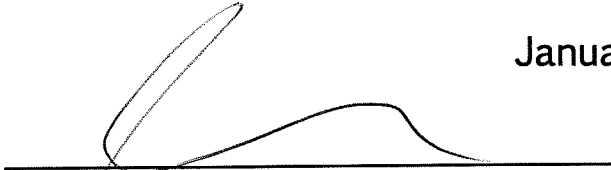
New/Old Business

The next meeting is scheduled for February 28, 2013. Mr. Hoffman noted he would like to push the reorganization and the possibility of moving the meeting from 7:30PM to 7:00PM to the February meeting since there will be reappointments by the Board for the Planning Commission.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission, a unanimous vote for adjournment was in order at 9:15 P.M.

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Andrew Frey, Vice Chair