

**MANHEIM TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
Wednesday
April 15, 2009**

A meeting of the Manheim Township Planning Commission was held on Wednesday, April 15, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. The following members were present: Mr. Jeffrey Sturla; Mr. Michel Gibeault; Mr. Robert Wolf; Mr. Donald Reed; Mrs. Mary Ellen Hollinger and Mr. Michael Martin. Mr. Cory Rathman was absent. The following Township staff was present: Mrs. Lisa Douglas and Mrs. Shannon Sinopoli.

Roll Call

Mr. Sturla called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and conducted roll call.

Minutes

Mr. Sturla asked for a motion on the March 18, 2009 Planning Commission meeting minutes.

On a motion by Mr. Reed, seconded by Mr. Wolf it was recommended to approve the March 18, 2009 meeting minutes.

Motion Approved 6-0.

Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Sturla indicated that, as with the past several meetings, the Planning Commission will continue to take public comment through May and then the planning members will hold a special public meeting, either in May or June, which will be strictly for comprehensive plan discussion.

Mrs. Douglas indicated that a special meeting was held in November 2008 where the consultants presented the Comprehensive Plan to the planning members. Mrs. Douglas stated that there was a large turn out at that time and that since November; the Planning Commission has allocated time at each of the subsequent planning commission meetings to allow for additional public input.

Mrs. Douglas advised that residents are encouraged to comment and that there have been numerous comments received so far, not only at the regular meetings, but also through letters and e-mails.

Mr. Sturla reminded everyone that the Comprehensive Plan is a document that does not change any zoning through its adoption and that at the end of the Comprehensive Plan, if it is adopted, it will not change any current zoning. If someone wishes to change any zoning, they would have to go through a rezoning process.

Mr. Sturla asked for public comment.

Patron #1: Doreen Kreiner, 1713 Windsor Avenue:

Ms. Kreiner expressed her concerns regarding the idea of high-density development being confined to the south side of Route 30.

Ms. Kreiner stated that the area is already overcrowded with bumper-to-bumper traffic and traffic gridlocks and expressed her concern regarding the potential for additional pollution which could have an adverse effect on the health of area residents residing in the high-density urban areas.

Ms. Kreiner stated that high-density developments should be planned efficiently and responsibly and felt that the plan appeared to her to be somewhat of a proposal to quarantine high-density development.

Ms. Kreiner stated that farms should be preserved throughout the entire Township and not isolated to one small area of the Township as such does not serve any practical purpose.

Ms. Kreiner felt that provisions should be made to allow farmers to rezone their lands to Agricultural, which would make them eligible for Clean and Green, Transferable Development Rights and Ag Preservation.

Ms. Kreiner stated that she felt that there was not enough focus on conservation, open space and alternative energy and that linking communities through alternative transportation is a necessity and providing safe biking and walking paths are essential since there are not many places that are safe to walk or bike.

Ms. Kreiner indicated that green technologies should be incorporated into all new construction.

Ms. Kreiner stated that replacing farms and green spaces with strip malls and apartment complexes robs the community and asked that the planning members use common sense to ensure that the growth of the Township does not diminish the present quality of life.

Patron #2: Judy Rettich, 2376 Henbird Lane

Ms. Rettich stated that she has lived in various other parts of the country and moved to Manheim Township 3-1/2 years. Ms. Rettich stated that during her residency in these other states, she saw a lot of farm lands diminish and become suburbanized throughout the country.

Ms. Rettich stated that when she moved to Lancaster, she told all of her friends that she had found a very unique place that lies right in the middle of farmland, yet is only two minutes away from a Starbucks.

Ms. Rettich felt that Manheim Township is very unique and is special and part of the reason is because farmland still exists here.

Ms. Rettich requested that more farmland be saved throughout the township. Mr. Rettich stated that living near open space and green areas has been shown to be an emotionally and mentally healthy place for human beings and is important.

Patron #3: Bob Hagen, 93 Roosevelt Boulevard

Mr. Hagen indicated that he has lived here since 1973 and right behind his house is the Hess Farm and that, although he understands that this is only comprehensive plan discussions, he doesn't want to go down a path that becomes more and more difficult to turn away from.

Mr. Hagen indicated that the status of the Hess property is still unknown, however, based on the sale price per acre, it appears to him that a shopping center would be a good guess at what the future proposal is because nothing else would be financially justified to make any money.

Mr. Hagen asked that the Planning Commission not allow another mega shopping center in his backyard.

Patron #4: Nelson Rohrer, 2651 Oregon Pike

Mr. Rohrer stated that, although the Comprehensive Plan doesn't rezone any properties, having the future land use map designation could be a very valuable tool of people to use to justify a rezoning of their property.

Mr. Rohrer stated that the Transferable Development Right (TDR) program has not been successful and the program that was envisioned versus what it is today is two different entities.

Mr. Rohrer stated that the Board of Commissioners should have been monitoring the program all along to make sure it functioned for all parties involved, but it did not happen.

Mr. Rohrer stated that the current Board of Commissioners are doing their best to correct the situation, however, they are stuck behind the eight ball because a tremendous amount of ground has been lost due to development and the areas for potential receiving areas were lost.

Mr. Rohrer stated that one of the things that farmers are looking for is value. Mr. Rohrer stated that the TDR program was designed for the benefit of the farmers to recoup the value that they lost when their land was rezoned to Agricultural, but the values that the farmers are receiving are not anywhere close to what they should be.

Mr. Rohrer suggested the planning member look at some way to allow farmers to potentially use their TDRs and expand and evaluate a situation for additional means of utilizing TDRs while getting top dollar values.

Patron #5: Jeff Ross, Newton Road Resident

Mr. Ross stated that a few months ago he presented the planning members with a petition signed by residents of the School Lane Hills development asking the Planning Commission to reconsider a portion of the plan that recommended high-density housing in certain portions below Route 30.

Mr. Ross asked if there is a mechanism in place for changes to be made to the existing plan prior to the submission of the plan to the Board of Commissioners or if the plan is a document that is going to be discussed for the next few months and then either submitted or not submitted.

Mr. Sturla indicated that the planning members can recommend either moving the plan forward as is; moving the plan forward with minor changes; or moving the plan forward with major changes.

Mr. Sturla indicated that the planning members have not gotten to that point yet, but the plan, at some time, will be move forward to the Commissioners with some type of recommendation.

Mr. Sturla stated that after the regular May Planning Commission meeting, the planning members will hold a special meeting dedicated to discussions and recommendations concerning the plan.

Subdivision/Land Development Plans

1. **Stonehenge Reserve - Final, Phase I Subdivision/Land Development Plan - Northwest corner of Fruitville Pike and Koser Road – Zoned R-1 w/ TDR option.**

Present representing this Final, Phase I Subdivision and Land Development Plan was Mr. Robert Shenk, Herbert Rowland & Grubic.

Mr. Shenk stated that the preliminary plans for this development have been in front of the Planning Commission numerous times throughout the past year and that they are now moving forward with Phase I of the approved plans.

There were no questions or comments from the planning members.

Mr. Sturla asked for public comment. There was no response.

On a motion by Mr. Wolf, seconded by Mr. Reed, it was recommended to approve this plan and modifications contingent upon a clean review letter.

Motion Approved 6-0.

Rezoning/Text Amendment/Conditional Use Reviews

1. **Oregon Dairy Farm/Hurst Enterprises – Conditional Use Request – Agricultural Composting Facility – Oregon Pike - Zoned Agricultural.**

Present representing this Conditional Use Request was Mr. Aaron Marines, Blakinger, Byler & Thomas; Mr. George Hurst and Mr. Chad Hurst, applicants.

Mr. Marines stated that his applicants are requesting a Conditional Use to permit an Agricultural Composting Facility.

Mr. Marines indicated that just a few months earlier, they were in front of the planning members with a text amendment to amend the zoning ordinance to permit an Agricultural Composting use and that at that time, the planning members were presented with all of the science of Agricultural Composting and the art of composting, etc.

Mr. Marines indicated that during the public hearing for the text amendment the Board of Commissioners added language to limit the operation size of the facility to 5-acres.

Mr. Marines proceeded to go down through the sections of the ordinance and explained how the applicants intended to meet each requirement and explained how the operation would function.

Mr. Marines indicated that the only traffic coming onto the site from Oregon Pike would be truck traffic and also stated that there would be no public traffic to the site, which is a requirement of the ordinance.

Mr. Marines indicated that there are some areas on the 59-acre parcel that have karst geology features and the potential for sink hole formation, however, that those areas are located to the very back of the lot and away from the composting facility.

Mr. Marines indicated that this type of operation is more accepted than simply spreading the fields as the odors from composting will actually be reduced and is better controlled and better for the environment.

Mr. Marines indicated that prior to the start of such operation the applicants will need to obtain a general permit from the Department of Environmental Protection.

Mr. Marines stated that the facility will have an average of 5-10 trucks on site per day, all coming and leaving from Oregon Pike

Mr. Marines indicated that a full Traffic Impact Study will be forthcoming which will also come more into play during the land development process.

Mr. Marines explained the flow of truck traffic.

Mr. Sturla asked for public comment. There was no response.

On a motion by Mr. Gibeault, seconded by Mr. Reed it was recommended to table this Conditional Use request.

Motion Approved 6-0.

Public Hearing scheduled for June 8, 2009.

2. Susquehanna Bank – Conditional Use Request – Planned Residential Development Signage Regulation Modifications – Wetherburn Commons – Fruitville Pike and Petersburg Road – Zoned R-3.

No one was in attendance to represent this Conditional Use request.

On a motion by Mr. Gibeault, seconded by Mrs. Hollinger it was recommended to table this Conditional Use request.

Motion Approved 6-0.

Public Hearing scheduled for June 8, 2009.

Public Comment

Mrs. Emiline Belser, 2630 Mondamin Farm Road indicated that she has been a resident since 1965.

Mrs. Belser expressed her disappointment with the lack of a buffer area over at the Wetherburn Commons Planned Residential Development.

Mrs. Belser indicated that the commercial portion of the development is alright, but that across the street where the townhouses are is and eyesore that looms out of nowhere.

Mrs. Belser stated that at one time that land was a beautiful farm and is now covered with three-story dwellings. Mrs. Belser asked if language could be added to ordinances to require more buffer areas for developments so that when approaching an intersection (such as the Fruitville Pike/Petersburg Road intersection), one can see some greenery and not just a huge building looming out of nowhere.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Reed, seconded by Mrs. Hollinger, it was recommended to adjourn the meeting.

Motion approved 6-0 and the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

The next Regular Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 20, 2009 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon L. Sinopoli