

**BENNER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
August 12, 2004**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Regularly scheduled meeting of the Benner Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairman Rob Fugate at the Benner Township Municipal Building.

**ATTENDANCE**

Members present: Tim Robinson, Joe Shultz, Mike Anthony and Rob Fugate. Members absent were Genny Robine, Jim Swartzell and Bob Morrell. Also present: Renee Swancer, Zoning Officer, Michael Shamalla—Park and Rec. Director. Residents present: Melissa Gummo, Chris Gummo, Gilbert Gummo, Fred & Carol Gay, and Bob Lumley-Sapanski.

**MINUTES**

Planning Commission received the meeting minutes of July 8, 2004 for their review and approval. Corrections needed to me made to members present and absent. Changes were made. Mr. Shultz moved the minutes be accepted. Mr. Anthony seconded the motion.

Vote: Mr. Swartzell: absent	Mr. Fugate: yes	Mrs. Robine: absent	Mr. Morrell -absent
Mr. Shultz: yes	Mr. Anthony: yes	Mr. Robinson: yes	

**PERSONS TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**

University Park Airport Preliminary Plan: The University Park Airport, Phase 7, plan was presented to the Commission for their review and approval. All comments have been addressed. Mr. Anthony moved to approve the plans. Mr. Robinson seconded the motion.

Vote: Mr. Swartzell: absent	Mr. Fugate: yes	Mrs. Robine: absent	Mr. Morrell -absent
Mr. Shultz: yes	Mr. Anthony: yes	Mr. Robinson: yes	

Proposed Rails-to-Trails along Buffalo Run: Mr. Mike Shamalla, director of Benner Township Park and Recreation, discussed the proposed rails-to-trails Feasibility Study along Buffalo Run to the Commission. Property owners along the proposed trail were sent postcards from the Centre County Planning Office announcing a public meeting was to be held at the Benner Township Planning Commission meeting where they could learn more about the study. Residents Fred and Carol Gay, Gilbert Gummo, Melissa Gummo, Chris Gummo and Bob Lumley-Sapanski were present to hear this discussion.

Mr. Shamalla showed maps and discussed the proposed trail's route which starts at the Bellefonte Waterfront and ends in Toftrees. Mr. Shamalla noted it is hoped that a grant to conduct the feasibility study will be submitted in October 2004. Presentations were made at Bellefonte Borough and Spring Township. Spring Township decided to table support. Bellefonte Borough will review the proposal at their next meeting. Mrs. Carol Gay, property owner along the proposed trail, voiced her strong opinion against the trail. She does not want the trail going through her property; nor does she want to deal with the problems of people using the trail. She moved to the country to enjoy peace and quiet and wants her privacy respected.

Mr. Gilbert Gummo, property owner along the trail, also voiced his strong opinion against the trail. Mr. Gilbert Gummo indicated the rail right-of-way is owned by him, and he has no intention on selling it for any price for a trail. Cattle graze along this right-of-way and he is concerned about safety issues.

Mr. Shamalla indicated the park and recreation survey returned by residents indicated "people wanted walking trails" and "would support a rails-to-trail project." Mrs. Melissa Gummo asked if those people that responded either lived along the proposed trail or owned property. Mr. Shamalla noted that the surveys returned in favor of the trail were residents not living along the trail. Mrs. Melissa Gummo's opinion is people not owning property along the trail would definitely want to use others property along the trail for their own recreation cause they don't own it. If people in the Township want a trail then put it somewhere else. She indicated she is definitely not in favor of the project.

Mr. Shamalla indicated trails typically increase property values. Residents present felt their property values would not increase.

Mr. Fugate felt the right-of-way for the ownership along the proposed trail has to be thoroughly investigated. Mr. Shamalla noted the Feasibility Study would address these issues.

Mr. Shamalla asked the Planning Commission is they would send a recommendation of support to the Benner Township Supervisors to expend funds of \$13,500 for the Feasibility Study. The Rails-to-Trails Task Force estimates the study could cost \$100,000. Matching funds of \$50,000 is needed from participating municipalities.

Mr. Fugate stressed concerns of the project is moving ahead too fast. The Commission decided to table the recommendation till members Jim Swartzell, Genny Robine, and Bob Morrell could be present at the meeting.

Mr. Anthony moved to table discussion till the next Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Shultz seconded the motion.

Vote: Mr. Swartzell: absent	Mr. Fugate: yes	Mrs. Robine: absent	Mr. Morrell -absent
Mr. Shultz: yes	Mr. Anthony: yes	Mr. Robinson: yes	

**NEW BUSINESS**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**NOTES**

**ADJOURN**

With all business complete, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Renee Swancer, Zoning Officer