

BENNER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
December 10, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Benner Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM by the Vice-Chairman, Paul Kurtz who led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ATTENDANCE

Members present: Paul Kurtz, Jim Swartzell, Lee Copper, and Greg Jeffries.

Members absent: Nate Campbell, Willis Houser, Sherry Dawn Jackson

Others present: Sign-in Sheet attached to minutes

MINUTES

The minutes from the November 12, 2015 meeting were presented for approval. Mr. Jeffries made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Swartzell seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Vote: Mr. Jeffries-yes Mr. Copper-yes
 Mr. Kurtz-yes Mr. Swartzell-yes

PERSONS TO ADDRESS THE BOARD:

1. Larry Miles, Greater Buffalo Run Valley United Methodist Church

Mr. Miles, representing the churches of Fillmore Road, Buffalo Run Road, and Valley View Road spoke about their organization. The three churches are thinking of combining, and if they were to combine, they would need to consider a single location. They have been considering property at 1881 Buffalo Run Road. They would like to consider a community center, as well as a sanctuary. Currently, churches are not listed as a permitted use in the A Zoning District, which this property is zoned A, Agriculture. Mr. Anderson noted that the new Zoning Ordinance should consider allowing churches in the A Zone, if not within all zoning categories. One major concern about allowing churches anywhere might be to limit the size, and prevent a "mega-church" from locating on farmland. This could be seen as similar to spot zoning, and would probably be inappropriate for such a location. Size could be limited to 500 pews in a sanctuary.

Questions were asked about potential accessory uses, and what preliminary planning might have been done. Other potential avenues that the church group could pursue were outlined, including a variance, and zoning (text) amendment, or a rezoning application.

2. Dr. Clair

Has been thinking, much of Benner Township is government owned, or in many ways tax exempt. One way to improve the municipal tax base could be to facilitate commercial development. This could include making more land available for commercial development, and/or adding uses to commercial zones to make potential new ventures easier to start.

Dr. Clair also wanted to suggest that we look into revising our 537 plan. The 537 plan is the EPA document that outlines what waste disposal service offers service to what properties. It defines who gets to service what land. Specifically, the property in Benner Township on Shiloh Road needs utility service, especially water and sewer. This property is currently within the service district of Spring, Benner Walker, but they lack the ability to service the area because their service lines are far from this area.

Questions were asked, including a definition of the process to amend the 537 Plan, and noting that the interstate interchange area is a prime area for commercial development. It was recommended that staff (Mr. Anderson) draft a letter from the Planning Commission to the Board of Supervisors outlining the process, some of the pro's and con's of amending the 537 Plan. This letter would ask for action on amending the 537 Plan, have the solicitor outline the process, note the potential for additional tax revenue, and note that commercial development needs viable sewage disposal. Mr. Swartzell made a motion to this effect, seconded by Mr. Jefferies, with all voting in favor.

3. Clair Stem

Mr. Stem addressed the board. He show the Commissioners maps showing survey lines that seemed to show discrepancies between them. The Commissioners informed Mr. Stem that the Township had no standing in property disputes, and that Mr. Stem could contact attorneys or surveyors to assist with the presented problem.

4. Renee Swancer

She asked the Board where we are with the proposed Zoning Ordinance. She has had heavy concerns with previous drafts, but she is gaining a certain confidence level with the current draft.

Renee's primary reason for addressing the Board is to bring to the Townships' attention that Bellefonte Borough is planning to distribute bio-solids on neighboring properties. She is concerned with this proposal, especially with the Karst geology, wellhead protection zones, and the existing water table. She suggests more research needs to happen, maybe even a Department of Environmental Protection study. The Commission directed staff (Mr. Anderson) to help determine what role the Township needs to play in the spreading of sludge. They suggested checking with the County Conservation District, and wonder if they would need to obtain a permit to distribute bio-solids.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Benner Township Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Anderson presented the most recent addition to the Zoning Ordinance proposal, a chart outlining a fairly comprehensive list of permitted uses, and what districts these uses would be allowed to operate in. Due to the lateness of the hour, discussion was delayed until later meetings, although the Planning Commission decided to convene the Zoning Ordinance Committee at the next regular meeting, January 14, 2016.

OLD BUSINESS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. Zoning Ordinance Review Committee Report

Having not met, there was no report.

2. Zoning Officer report

Mr. Anderson reported that the Board of Supervisors did consider the rezoning application for the Village of Nittany Glen at their recent meeting. After some interesting discussion, they voted to approve the rezoning of the property with 2 voting in favor, and 1 voting against.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

Notes: None

ADJOURN: The meeting adjourned at 7:905 PM

Respectfully submitted by:

Christopher Anderson, Zoning Officer
By listening to the tape of the recorded meeting.

Planning Commission
December 10, 2015

(Please print)

Name	Address
G. F. Clark	146 Clair Ln. S.E.
Calvin Miller	1438 Buffalo Run Road
BARRY ISHLER	145 SUNSET ACRE KBLP
MEL & KRIS DOULS	2924 BUFFALO RUN RD
LARRY & MARY ANN MILES	658 MAPLE DR
Ann E. Gull	313 Hickory ST
Denise Geissinger	291 Hickory st
Janet Brown Kustanbater	175 Willow Bend Dr.
Mildred Harper	132 Apple Street
Shirley Gryczuk	111 ASTER AVE.
Pamela Swan	
Debra Houser	1503 Valley View Rd.
Peggy H. Shuffstall	186 Hull Lane, Bellefontaine